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THE SALUTARY DESCENT

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1. The theme "rise and descent", together with another closely related dichotomy, "upper part"–"lower part", appears to be one of the most meaningful topics in the broad domain of cultural, anthropological and, particularly, religious studies. One can mention but a few equally important opposites that as directly reflect the most essential traits of our experience and, at the same time, pertain to the cardinal structural and semantic qualities of religious dogmatics, myth, ritual procedure, etc.[1] The many direct or indirect use of corresponding notions encompasses various spheres of human activity, each with different functions and evaluations concerning their surroundings.[2]

This dichotomy naturally refers first of all to spatial relations, appearing as a common modelling universal in different cosmologies. The examples are too numerous to be cited. Let us consider only the well-known threefold vertical division of cosmos in Vedic tradition (cf. tridhātu in RV I, 154. 4 a.o.) into three worlds: heaven (dyāus), midspace (antarīkṣa) and earth (pṛthvī).[3] This division with occasional modification (heaven-earth-underworld) has been preserved throughout the millenia of Indian culture.

The categories of "ascent"–"descent" (like those of "upper part"–"lower part") have from time immemorial transgressed the limits of the purely spatial, and have served in describing emotional and psychic (cf. e.g. Lat. "exsultare" derivatives) states and, consequently, ethic values. They have, thus, helped to model a kind of ethical continuum in which they describe a number of cardinal dichotomies—both directly (like those of "heaven-"earth"; "heaven"–"underworld") and obliquely (resp. "day"–"night"; "light"–"darkness; "pure"–"impure", etc.).[4] Corresponding opposites as a rule receive positive or negative ethical evaluation, respectively, here, such as "elevated", "exalted" or "base", "low". Assuming this general usage, we shall try to note its

modifications resulting from certain dogmatic peculiarities (such as e.g. Hindu approach to ''life''–''death'' opposition).

Regarding this model of ethical space one can speak of dogmatic, mythological, or ritualistic elements which serve here as organizing factors connected with vertical transference.[5] These are, within the framework of Indian sources, the oppositions of ''this world'' (the earth) and ''that world'' (the sky) (BU I. 5.4: ayaṃ lokaḥ .... asau lokaḥ), or of ''the path of the gods'' (devayāna) and ''the path of the fathers'' (pitryāna) (BU VI. 2.15-16; ChU IV. 15; V. 10; cf. KauU 1.2 sq.).[6] The Buddhist model likewise suggests the opposition of ''this'' and ''that'' world (lokiya-lokuttara) connected with the idea of corresponding transition, accomplished by a monk in the course of perfection.[7]

The function of the connecting link in this space can be fulfilled by a superhuman, yet anthropomorphic, being like puruṣa in Vedic cosmogony, Viṣṇu (cf. below), etc.[8] Among other organizing factors the cosmic tree is perhaps the most widespread[9]—both in spatial and ethical regulation (cf. BU III, 9. 28; TU I, 10.1; KtU II, 3.1; SU III, 9; VI, 6; MtU VI, 4; Bg. XV, 1-3, etc.). The ritual text can also serve such a link—cf. the function of the sacred syllable ''om'' (aum) which leads the believer to highest perfection (PU, V, 2-5)[10] when properly used in meditation. The same is said of other sacrifical formulas. As we know, this symbolism is variously reflected in iconographic tradition, with corresponding localization of individual symbols.[11]

Nevertheless, this regularity does not always appear to be immutable: as we have already mentioned, it now and then permits different interpretations of the same concept. So, within the frameworks of separate traditions, and staying in the same system of the ethical space, we come across different meanings and functions of the ''descent'' phenomenon. On the one hand such a ''descent'' (literal or metaphorical) corresponds with the general evaluation of the ''upper''–''lower'' dichotomy (as well as with other correlated opposites) mentioned above. It is not necessarily connected here with the idea of subsequent salvation or ascent, but is influenced, rather, by the sum of previous deeds and qualities of the descendant (one may say, by his karmic state) and by his inclinations which have nothing to do with the purpose of salvation. It

may even be opposed to it. With respect to godly descendants one can cite manifold anthropomorphic beliefs (e.g. as a result of passion in ancient Greek mythology) or the fallen—rather than descended—semigods (asuras, fallen angels, etc.).[12] The mortal variant is, e.g., returning (after temporary ascent, as in the evidence mentioned above, in note 6) to mother womb or to one of the lower worlds, with subsequent rebirth, which can be repeated many times. Other well-known beliefs speak of a single descent to Hades, hell, etc., the final salvation being possible as a result of certain other activities and not of descent itself.

We are dealing here with another type of descent—one that serves a necessary device for subsequent ascent, liberation and perfection. As such, it can appear in its independent positive value, sometimes even without any explicit reference to the goal. This salutary descent is also characteristic not only of god-like creatures (beginning with most archaic ideas of shamans' heavenly origin and ending with modern Messianic beliefs) but of mortals as well. It is connected with a large field of religious studies that go beyond the scope of the present paper. We shall restrict ourselves to a few aspects of this salutary descent—mainly those pertaining to ancient Indian sources.

2. The widespread motif of perfection preceded or accompanied by denigration, descent, etc. can be illustrated by semantic usage, e.g. that of "humility", "humble" (Lat. "humus")—so typical of a pious context.[13] This attitude appears as an important feature in the ancient Hindu institution of brahmacārin ("leading a chaste life") whereby the pupil lives in the house of his teacher.[14] He must respect the latter like a deity (the father giving him birth is not as important as the "father" who gives him the knowledge of Veda—Man II, 146). He must serve the teacher, tend his house, the sacred fires, the cattle; go begging for him when necessary. He sleeps on earth, washes his teacher's feet, always takes the lower seat, waits upon his relatives, and so on (Man II, 71 sq., 108, 130 sq., 198 etc.). According to Man II, 233, obedience to mother leads him to this world, obedience to father to midspace, while obedience to guru leads to heaven. He must avoid praise and strive for contempt (II, 162).

We can suggest that the student's state and the process of study itself are relfected in the corresponding texts. We refer to the genre of upaniṣads, the precepts that played a decisive role in Indian spiritual life. The etymology is fairly clear: a derivative from the verb upa-ni-sad- "to sit down at" (evidently, "at the feet of another to listen to his words").[15] The notion of the genuine, mysterious, esoteric knowledge (cf. SU V, 6; VI, 22; BU VI, 3. 12; ChU III, 11.5; MuU iii, 2.11 etc.) thus developed from the original description of the posture of the pupil, listening to his teacher. Here one should consider the prefix upa- (Greek ὑπό, Lat. sub, etc.), bearing the sense of approaching, being in a lower state and, consequently, approaching from beneath, a respectful approach, etc. Hence the notion of upāsana (cf. ChU II, 1.1; KauU II, 7 etc.) from upa-ās- "to sit near, at hand" (in order to honour or wait upon, to serve, to respect, etc.) denoting, evidently, the teachings of the upaniṣads and the act of genuinely understanding and worshipping them.[16] Cf. also such notions as upapanna—"approached" as a pupil, for protection; upanayana—a ceremony of brāhmaṇa's initiation preceding his studies; etc.

A particular example of approach for knowledge is presented in the text of Kaṭha upaniṣad. During the sacrifice Vājaśravasa (called in KtU I, 1.10-11 also Gautama and Auddālaki, the son of Aruṇa—cf. below) gets angry with his son Naciketas, who doubted the efficiency of traditional rite, and swears to give him to Death. Naciketas (cf. possible interpretation of his name: "I do not know") understands him verbally and goes to the abode of Yama, god of death. He stands there for three nights waiting for Yama's return (Taittirīya brāhmaṇa III, 11.8) and the god being pleased permits him to make three wishes. First, the youth chooses to allay his father's anger. Then he asks to recieve knowledge of the celestial fire that leads to heaven (cf. ChU VI, 8.4 and corresponding allegories—see above, note 6).[17] Finally, he wishes to know the fate of man after death. The plot of Kaṭha, noteworthy in particular for its dramatic initial point (father's wrath and son's obedience that lead to highest perfection), can be compared with the traditional genre of peregrinatio—a pilgrimage in quest of truth. The functions of Yama—god of death, ruling over spirits of the deceased, king of the South—evidently correspond to some of the notions dis-

cussed here and enable one to speak of descent, followed by successful ascent of the illuminated hero (cf. Yama's words to Naciketas "released from the jaws of death"—KtU I, 1. 11).[18] At the same time certain details—three night's waiting; a chain (srṅkām) given by the god to youth (KtU I, 1.16); etc.—suggest a peculiar initiatory rite, reflected in the text.[19]

The Upanishadic evidence also presents other images of pupils acting in less dramatic circumstances, though not less patient and self-denying. Satyakāma Jābāla, son of a maid-servant and unknown father, serves Haridrumata Gautama (ChU IV, 4 sq.) waiting for instruction. The teacher gives him four hundred thin, weak cows and he tends them for years till they number a thousand. Then he receives the right knowledge from a bull, the fire, a swan and a diving-bird, yet, though enlightened, he asks the teacher for instruction. Afterwards, himself a teacher, he behaves still more strictly towards his pupil, Upakosala Kāmālayana, who tends his fires for twelve years (ibid. IV, 10 sq.). Satyakāma neither instructs him nor allows him to depart (like other pupils) notwithstanding his own wife's arguments. "Then on account of sickness (grief), he resolved not to eat. The teacher's wife said to him: "O student of sacred wisdom, please eat. Why, pray, do you not eat?" Then he said: "Many are the desires in this person, which proceed in different directions. I am filled with sicknesses (griefs). I will not eat" (ChU IV, 10. 3).[20] Thereupon, the sacrificial fires pity him and give him instruction (particularly about the ascent to Brahman—ChU, IV, 15.5; cf. above, note 6).

Divine creatures are subject to this trial as well. The god Indra and asura Virocana live thirty-two years with the teacher of gods, Prajāpati (ChU VIII, 7 sq.), who first gives an incomplete explanation of Ātman, in order to test them. Virocana believes it and departs, thinking he has found the truth; but in fact he has acquired a disastrous doctrine close to hedonism. Thus, the thirty-two years of study do not help him (cf. MtU VII, 10, where Brahman deliberately cheats the asuras who desire to known Ātman). Unlike Virocana, Indra remains unsatisfied, returns to Prajāpati, receives another incomplete admonition and so on, till at last after 101 years of study he receives genuine knowledge.

This humiliation is not only typical of pupils. Kavaṣa Ailūṣa is not allowed by brāhmaṇas to participate in the sacrifice, but, though rejected as a son of a maid-servant, he later shows them the way to knowledge. Uṣasti Cākrāyaṇa, who has evidently accomplished his studies, lives in great poverty in a destroyed village and begs for food. Later, however, he becomes a priest and admonishes his less competent fellow-workers (ChU I, 10-11). A king, Brihadratha, leaves the kingdom to his son and goes into the forest to practice austerity for several years. Then he asks the sage Śākāyanya for instruction, denouncing in a characteristic manner (cf. below, note 67) the mortal body and speaking of his sorrow ("Be pleased, therefore, to deliver me. In this world (cycle of existence) I am like a frog in a waterless well"—MyU I, 4).[21]

The Upanishadic believer, though not necessarily suffering in his quest for truth, is always full of self-denial, humility and devotion to his teacher. "Not by work, nor by offspring or wealth; only by renunciation (tyāgena) does one reach life eternal" (Kaivalya upaniṣad, 2; cf. ibid. 5).[22]

The pupil's trial, often connected with humiliation and suffering, seems to be natural enough with respect to the goal—the attainment of highest perfection beyond all worldly attachments. More surprising here is the following evidence, regarding the teacher's image; his behaviour occasionally exceeds the accepted norms of strictness and approaches cruelty. An evident heartlessness is displayed by Satyakāma Jābālā, who drives his pupil almost to suicide. In the same chapter (ChU IV 1-2) we read about the learned Raikva who is sought by Jānaśruti Pautrāyaṇa. The latter finds Raikva under a cart, whereupon the sage looking rather miserable, displays attitudes of coarseness, avidity and lasciviousness. He calles Jānaśruti (a kṣatriya) a śūdra, refuses to accept his liberal gift—a payment for learning (six hundred cows, a gold necklace and a chariot with mules) and agrees only when Jānaśruti presents him with a thousand cows etc. together with his own daughter and the village where he lived. Lifting up the girl's face and evidently contented with it, Raikva comments: "śūdra, merely by this face you would make me speak" (IV, 2. 5)—the words are plain enough, though softened in later allegorical inter-pretations.[23] One can say that the Upanishadic evidence somehow

"lowers" the image of the preceptor: in a certain correspondence with the pupil's humiliation, we come across arrogance and cruelty on the part of the teacher, in other words, a certain degradation (this time a moral one).

Here we shall touch upon a peculiar and rather unexpected trait in exposing the admonition. The precepts of Yājñavalkya (a famous Upanishadic sage who preaches the essence of the doctrine) about Ātman are followed in BU III, 9.26 (cf. SB XI, 6.3.11) by a curse on his opponent Śākalya, guilty of ignorance. He threatens that Śākalya's head will fall off (mūrdhā to vipatiṣyati) if he does not answer his question.[24] It is not a bluff; Śākalaya is unable to answer, his head falls off and robbers take away his bones. In SB XI, 6.3.11, Yājñavalkya predicts that Śākalya will die in an inauspicious place and time, and that even his bones shall not be brought home. Thus it happens. Śaṃkara's commentary explains that Śākalya was punished for not having respected the knower of Brahman, yet the punishment still appears to be too cruel. Another threat is addressed to Gārgī Vācaknavī. Yājñavalkya warns the woman to be moderate in questioning: "Gārgī, do not question too much lest your head fall off. Verily, you are questioning too much about a divinity about which we are not to ask too much" (III, 6.1).[25] This time Gārgī's curiosity is the crime. She, however, keeps silent and remains alive. The same curse is used against Yājñavalkya himself. Uddālaka Āruṇi (another great sage; cf., in particular, his tat tvam asi, "that art thou"—in ChU VI, 8. 7 sq.) threatens him in the same manner, but Yājñavalkya knows the right answer (BU III, 7.1 sq.). In ChU, Śilaka Śālāvatya (I, 8.6) and Pravāhaṇa Jaivali (I, 8.8) again use it in a talk. Later, Uṣasti Cākrāyaṇa, mentioned above, uses it (I, 10. 9-11; 11. 4-9) while warning the priests not to recite corresponding texts without knowledge. Speaking to six brāhmaṇas, accepted by him as pupils, Aśvapati Kaikeya threatens each one with the loss of their heads, blindness, loss of breath, etc., had they not come to him for instruction (V, 12.2; 13.2; etc.). His curses are motivated by insufficient definitions which these brāhmaṇas give to Ātman. One could suggest that tribute is paid here to a traditional proberb (cf. also SB XI, 4.1.9; 5.3.13, etc.) which was evidently widespread (some parallels from Buddhist evidence will be adduced below). Yet the end of

Śākalya renders this usage somewhat less harmless. We can possibly speak of a certain aggressiveness of teachers which reveals (together with their obviously benefactory function in preaching the highest Truth) a character of definite ambivalence to their image.[26] It has already been remarked that a tendency to frighten or humiliate the listener appears at first to be somewhat incompatible with preaching the wisdom that leads a believer to perfection and bliss. Nevertheless, these "incompatibilities" do not seem to be accidental, and we shall return to similar cases below.

3. We spoke above mostly of mortals—pupils and preceptors, whose behaviour can be characterized by a definite descent, metaphorical or verbal, in search of the Truth or in proclaiming it. Let us consider now examples of divine descent, the descent of those already possessing the highest perfection. The cosmological principle places the world of gods above the world of mortals and the idea of divine descent—whatever its function is and whatever attitude it stimulates—naturally presupposes spatial descent in the original meaning of the word.

Ancient Indian evidence contains much data regarding the interference of gods in human life. Hymns of RV speak of Indra's wandering on earth in different forms (I, 55. 4; VI, 155.4; etc.); similar manifestations of Brahman, Varuṇa, Prajāpati, Rudra, etc. are depicted in vedas and brāhmaṇas.[27] We shall touch here upon certain aspects of Viṣṇu's descents, which, compared with those of other gods, have been more thoroughly described and have influenced to a greater extent Indian spiritual life.

The image of Viṣṇu appears entirely different in different epochs in separate trends of Hinduism—his functions, his place in Hindu pantheon, and relation to other deities suffer considerable changes.[28] In Vedic times he plays rather a secondary role, yielding to Indra, Soma, Agni, etc. However, in Vedic evidence we already find some characteristic traits of his image that were developed in later Hinduism. First of all, it is his ability to pervade all worlds (cf. a traditional etymology of his name; viś—"to enter", "to penetrate").[29] Another idea connected with his image is a quick transference in space (RV. I, 90.5; II, 34. 11; etc.)—cf. his epithets urugāya ("wide going"), urukrama ("wide striding"), etc.[30] This quality is displayed in a well-known motif of Viṣṇu's three strides,

widely represented in later epic tradition (cf. above, note 8). Here, his first two steps are connected with earth and midspace, accessible to a mortal's perception, while the third is connected with the heavenly world (RV, I, 22.18-21; 90.9; 154. 1.5; 155, 4-5; VI 49.13; VIII, 29.7; etc.). This transference was identified by ancient commentators with the sun's path through the three worlds (another interpretation connects it with the sun's position in the East, the Zenith and the West).

At the same time, Viṣṇu appears in RV as a benefactor and preserver: generous (I, 156. 2 sq.), giving protection (III, 55.10), helping to āryas (I, 156.6), etc. He defeats demons (Vṛtra, Vāsa, a.o.)—like Indra with whom he sometimes appears as an ally. Another characteristic quality is his manifestation in different forms (RV III, 55. 10; VII, 100. 6; etc.), in particular, his epithet śipiviṣṭa ("the smallest") in RV VII, 100.5 is connected perhaps with the image of a dwarf (cf. SB I, 2.5.5; V, 2.5.4. etc.; see below).[31] These traits which were developed later in brāhmaṇas (Śatapatha, Taittirīya) gradually draw his image nearer to that of epic Viṣṇu, so, e.g., here we find versions of his outwitting asuras in a dwarf's disguise (SB I, 2. 5. 5. so; TB I, 6. 1-5). There are also other motifs of Viṣṇu's incarnations, developed from brāhmaṇas' evidence (as SB I, 8. 1. 1 sq.; XIV, 1.2. 1; etc.).

An important process in the development of Vishnuism is the fusion (approximately from the middle of the 1st millenium B.C.) of Viṣṇu with other deities and heroes, which evidently lose their position as independent objects of veneration and are regarded as Viṣṇu himself or his manifestations. Likewise, his fusions with Nārāyaṇa, Brahman, Kṛṣṇa. Of these, Nārāyaṇa, who appears in brāhmaṇas, was esteemed as the primordial cosmic man (puruṣa), the author of the corresponding Vedic hymn (RV X, 90). He was also traditionally connected with some of the upaniṣads. Another name of Viṣṇu—Vāsudeva ("benefactory god")—refers to a deity identified in later Vedic texts with Viṣṇu and Nārāyaṇa, and regarded as a manifestation of the highest spirit.[32]

Various manifestations of Viṣṇu often play quite an independent role and appear at very different levels—from the highest transcendant Being (Bhagavan, Nārāyaṇa) to a mortal endowed with human qualities. This complexity is already reflected in epos, cf. a

list of his names in Mbh VI, 65. 61, or another more elaborate, through relatively later, list of a thousand names in Mbh XIII, 149.

We are interested here primarily in a traditional set of manifestations, marking the descent of Viṣṇu. It is noteworthy that these deeds received a name containing the same notion: avatāra (ava-tṝ, ''to descend'').[33] This term, though applied to decent in general (and particularly to the descent of a god), acquired a special designation for descents and manifestations of Viṣṇu (although not of him alone).[34] A number of his avatāras appear in Mbh (cf. III, 102. 21 sq.; XII, 341. 104 sq.; etc.)—a corresponding theory is completed in later epics (purāṇas) which are fully or partly dedicated to him (Viṣṇu, Nārada, Bhāgavata, Garuḍa, Padma, Varāha, etc.) These texts were compiled mostly in the second half of the 1st millenium A.D. and later.[35] Here the number of avatāras generally exceeds that of Mbh and varies in different sources, sometimes even within the frames of the same text, as, e.g., 16, 22, or 23 in BP I, 3; II, 7; XI, 4; cf. also Vāyu purāṇa 97. 72 sq.; 98. 63; etc. One of the fullest variants is found in a pāñcarātrin text Ahirbudhnya saṃhitā 5.50-57 (39 avatāras).[36]

At the same time we find in separate puranic texts (Varāha purāṇa, 15. 9 sq., MP, 285. 67; etc.) the lists of ten avatāras—a number that becomes canonical and from ca. XI century is found also in non-puranic Vishnuite poetry; in Kṣemendra's (XI c.) Daśavatāracarita, a poem especially dedicated to ten avatāras[37]; in Jayadeva's (the 2nd half of XII c.) Gītagovinda (I, 5 sq.); etc. They are: fish, tortoise, boar, man-lion, dwarf, Paraśurāma, Rāma, Kṛṣṇa, Buddha and Kalki. Among other avatāras, important in Hinduism, one can mention Nārāyaṇa (see above); Sanatkumāra (an embodiment of eternal youth); sages like Nārada, Kapila; Yajña (an embodiment of sacrifice); Vyāsa (the legendary author of Mbh and other epics), etc. However, the list of the ten incarnations, mentioned above, became the most popular.

When the time of deluge approaches Viṣṇu appears in the form of a fish (matsya) before Manu, the legendary forefather of mankind, averts him from the cataclysm and shows him the way to salvation. As a result, Manu and his family, the great sages and Vedas are saved. The next apparition is connected with the consequence of the deluge that had swallowed the god's drink of immor-

tality (amṛta). In the form of a tortoise (kūrma) Viṣṇu sinks to the
bottom of the ocean and becomes a support for the mountain Man-
dara, used by gods for churning the ocean, so that in the end amṛta
and other treasures appear on the surface (among them Lakṣmī,
goddess of luck and beauty, who became Viṣṇu's consort). Some
time after it, the earth is again submerged in the ocean by a demon
Hiraṇyākṣa. Viṣṇu assumes the form of a boar (varāha), kills the
demon, descends to the underworld and raises the earth on his tusk
from out of the ocean.[38] This exploit already marks Viṣṇu's suc-
cessful struggle against demons (asura) that take hold over the
world, frighten gods and men, act lawlessly, etc. This struggle is
characteristic of some of the following avatāras. Assuming the form
of ''man-liion'' (narasiṃha), a creature never seen before, Viṣṇu
tears to pieces the mighty invulnerable demon Hiraṇyakaśipu who
oppressed all pious creatures.[39] Afterwards another demon, Bali,
takes hold of the three worlds, threatening the gods. Viṣṇu appears
before him looking like a dwarf (vāmana), asks to present him three
paces of land and then becomes a giant, whereby he measures the
three worlds, leaving for Bali the underworld (cf. above, note 8).[40]
In the next avatāra (Paraśurāma) Viṣṇu appears as a mighty
brāhmaṇa and kills a wicked king, Kārtavirya, together with
numerous warriors that oppressed brāhmaṇas. The next is the
image of Rāma, princee of Ayodhya, who saved the world from the
demon Rāvaṇa (it is possible that a fusion with the historical king
ruling in VIII-VII cc. B.C. took place). This avatāra is widely
reflected in literary tradition (first of all—in Rāmayāṇa epic). Then
follows an avatāra which is, perhaps, even more famous in Indian
culture—that of Kṛṣṇa. The latter often appears as an independent
deity, his image being fused with that of Nārāyaṇa, Bhagavant, etc.
Kṛṣṇa is born in the kṣatriya family, Yadu; his parents are
persecuted by his uncle, the demon Kaṃsa, who received a pro-
phecy that his nephew would kill him. The boy, born with black
(kṛṣṇa) skin, grows up in the shepherd's house. His youth abounds
with stories of childish tricks and amorous adventures with
cowherdesses. Later exploits of Kṛṣṇa include victories over many
demons, help to shepherds, successful rivalry with gods (Brahman,
Varuṇa, etc.). Her appears as a friend and protector of pāṇḍavas
in Mbh—it is from him that Arjuna learns the great admonition of

Bhagavadgītā.[41] Kṛṣṇa is, however, traditionally esteemed as the god connected with pastoral thematics, supervising over herds (cf. his epithets; gopati, govinda, etc.; see e.g., BP X; Viṣṇu purāṇa V, 6. sq.; Agni purāṇa, 12 sq.; etc.) and as the conqueror of demons. This complicated image of shepherd—warrior—preceptor corresponding to a certain degree to the manifold character of Viṣṇu himself, is possibly derived from different prorotypes, mythical or historical, fused to a single avatāra.[42] The next Viṣṇu's descent as Buddha (though with considerable alterations in the latter's image) presents evidence of mutual interaction between different religious trends in India. Some aspects of Buddha's salutary function will be noted below; here we should merely remark that the reception of Buddha in Vishnuite dogmatics as one of Viṣṇu's avatāras,[43] agrees with the well-known phenomenon of Buddhism's accommodation to different (particularly non-Indian) cultural traditions. On the other hand, Buddhist dogmatics accept (though with substantional hierarchical modifications) the Hindu pantheon. Here Hindu gods are subject to the laws proclaimed by Buddha whom they worship and whose admonitions they are seeking.[44] The tenth and last avatāra is that of Kalki—the future image of Viṣṇu. In the end of the present kaliyuga (which began on the 18 II 3102 B.C. and lasts 432000 years) he will appear riding on a white horse, will punish evil, reward piety and, destroying the world sunk deep in vice, will re-establish the new golden age. This messianic apparition evoked many well-known parallels.[45]

   The complex of the ten avatāras displays certain interesting semantic regularities.[46] First of all they are united by one main function: saving the world from evil, defence of the oppressed, for whose sake Viṣṇu from time to time assumes different forms and descents. He himself refers to it in the image of Kṛṣṇa (Bg IV, 7-8): ''For whenever of the right a languishing appears .... a rising up of unright, then I send myself forth. For protection of the good and for destruction of evil-doers, to make a firm footing for the right, I come into being in age after age.''[47] (See also Mbh III, 272. 51; cf. XII, 341. 102 sq.; etc.). His descents are thus aimed at protecting and strengthening the dharma. Their chronological order is distributed within the framework of the four world periods (yuga) of Indian cosmology. In the first, the ''golden'' period (kṛtayuga),

he appears in the first four avatāras: fish, tortoise, boar (cf. note 38) and man-lion; in the second, the "silver" age (tretāyuga), in the next three: dwarf, Paraśurāma, Rāma; in the third, the "copper" age (dvāparayuga), as Kṛṣṇa; and in the last, the "iron" age (kaliyuga), as Buddha and the future Kalki.[48] There is another regulairty here—the progressive evolution of Viṣṇu's forms: as we see, his first three avatāras are theriomorphic, the fourth is mixed (man-lion), while the next are anthropomorphic.[49] Within the framework of this devlopment one can trace further traits of "phylogenetic" progress from aquatic to amphibious and mammals, while the human image also develops from a dwarf to the perfect form of a Buddha (cf. traditional description of the latter's body). It is interesting that besides this physical perfection an ethical one can be found in corresponding avatāras (though not always to the same degree). While Viṣṇu's earlier descents are stimulated mostly by cosmic disasters, gods' (or especially brāhmaṇas') troubles and the demons' arrogance, his subsequent apparitions are more and more characterized by preaching, which gradually replaces his violent attributes. This tendency culminates in the image of Buddha (while the last avatāra of Kalki, as already noted, again combines benevolence and violence). As we see, the salutary function presupposes salvation in the broad sense of the word: physical help in danger and calamity, on the one hand, and spiritual help in delusion, on the other. These are the abilities combined in the image of Kṛṣṇa, though usually they are distributed between different avatāras.[50]

These exploits do not, however, exclude certain ambivalent traits characteristic of Viṣṇu's image. His function of preservation and defence is accompanied by destruction and murder (e.g., in his apparitions as man-lion, Paraśurāma, Kalki).[51] A number of his epithets connected with this function reflect notions of enmity, slaughter, etc. (names referring to victories over asuras, such as Kaṃsāri—"enemey of Kaṃsa", Madhuripu—"enemy of Madhu", Madhusudana—"killer of Madhu" etc.). Such epithets, often used in Krishnaite lyrical tradition, sometimes lead to peculiar oxymoron-like combinations (cf. e.g., the title of the IV canto of Gītagovinda: snigdhamadhusudana—"the affectionate killer of Madhu").[52] Of all Viṣṇu's avatāras this one (Kṛṣṇa) is,

perhaps, most marked by human weakness and vice[53]—traits perti-
nent to different aspects of his activity. The epic evidence of Mbh,
Harivaṃśa, purāṇas refer to his tendency to fraud (cf. his advice
to pāṇḍavas in Mbh); while living among shepherds he steals,
devastates gardens, seduces shepherd's wives. He is humanized in
his lyrical type: his amorous states displaying grief, languor, repen-
tance, subjugation, etc.[54]

(*to be continued*)

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[1] Concerning the role of this opposition in different traditions, cf. e.g.: L. Beir-
naert, "Le symbolisme ascensionnel dans la liturgie et la mystique chré-
tiennes"—*EJ*, 1950, Bd. XIX, S. 41-63; M. Eliade, *Das Heilige und das Profane*,
Hamburg, 1957, S. 69 sq.; C. Lévi-Strauss, *Anthropologie structurale*, Paris, 1958,
pp. 147 sq.; V. V. Ivanov, V. N. Toporov, *Slavjanskie jazykovye modelirujuščie
semiotičeskie sistemy*, Moskva, 1965, pp. 98 sq.; 201 sq.; idem, *Issledovanija v oblasti
slavjanskix drevnostej*, Moskva, 1974, pp. 157, 260; *EJ*, 1981. *Aufstieg und Abstieg.
Rise and Descent. Descente et Ascension* (articles by U. Mann, D. L. Miller, D. I.
Lauf, a.o.).
[2] Such, for example, is the possibility of different evaluations of the same notion
within the framework of common sense, on the one hand, and the non-pragmatic,
idealistic approach on the other: cf. positive sense of "basic", "earthly" and
negative of "soaring over", in the first case, and reverse evaluations in the second.
[3] See: W. Kirfel, *Die Kosmograpie der Inder nach den Quellen dargestellt*, Bonn und
Leipzig, 1920, S. 20* sq.; S. Kramrish, "The triple structure of creation in the
Ṛg Veda"—*History of Religions*, vol. 2, N.1, 1962, pp. 140 sq.; J. Gonda, *Loka.
World and heaven in the Veda*. Amsterdam, 1966.
[4] Cf. Ivanov, Toporov, *Slavjanskie*, pp. 204 sq.
[5] We do not refer here to manifold "horizontal" aspects of this organization
and corresponding symbolism, correlated to a certain degree with our dichotomy
(cf. resp. "right"—"left" opposition; see, e.g., *Right and Left. Essays on dual sym-
bolic classification*, Ed. by R. Needham, Chicago, 1973).
[6] The following of these paths is vividly represented here in corresponding
descriptions that present a number of opposites correlated with "rise"—
"descent": resp. "flame"—"smoke", "day"—"night", "North"—"South",
"gods"—"fathers", "sun"—"moon", etc. Those who possess the genuine
knowledge follow the first path through the flame, the day, the world of the gods,
the sun, the lightning, and "to the worlds of Brahmā .... of these there is no
return" (*The Principal Upaniṣads*, ed. by S. Radhakrishnan, London, 1953, p.
314). The second path (of those performing regular rites) appears to be a partial
ascent with subsequent descent (i.e. rebirth), a process repeated in the wheel of
reincarnation; through the smoke (of the cremation fire), the night, the world of
the father, the moon, etc. Then, passing from the space into rain with which they
fall into the earth, they are born again. Cf. P. Thieme, "Der Weg durch den Him-

mel nach der Kaushitaki-Upanishad"—*Wiss. Zeitschrift der Martin-Luther-Universität, Halle-Wittenberg*, Jhrg. I, 1951/52, H. 3, Gesellschafts—und Sprachwissenschaftliche Reihe, N.1, S. 19-36; J. Jordens, "The development of the idea of immortality in the Upaniṣads"—*Journal of the Oriental Institute*, Baroda, vol. 16, N.1, 1966, pp. 1-17 etc. It is noteworthy that the right knowledge, securing the way to Brahman and exposed in previous paragraphs (BU VI.2. 9-13; ChU V. 4-9) presents a theory, in an allegory of the five sacrificial "fires", of man's origin resulting from a process of descent. The first "fire" ("that" celestial world) impregnated by faith (śraddhā, brought forth as a kind of oblation) gives birth to the king Soma (the moon). The latter is sacrificed in the second "fire"—Parjanya (the god of rain) and the rain is produced. The libation of rain in the third "fire" (the earth) produces food. The offering of food in the fourth "fire" (man) produces semen, and, finally, the libation of semen in the fifth "fire" (woman) leads to the birth of a human being. In another description of the dying person (ChU VI, 15.1-2) "his voice is merged in mind (manasi), mind in breath, breath in heat (tejasi), and heat in the highest deity" (parasyām devatāyām—*Principal Upaniṣads*, p. 465). Cf. Noble Ross Reat, "Karma and rebirth in the Upaniṣads and Buddhism"—*Numen*, v. 24, fasc. 3, 1977, pp. 163 sq. Concerning some analogies between birth and descent, on the one hand, and death and ascent of the soul, on the other, cf. M. Pulver, "Die Lichterfahrung in Johannes Evangelium im Corpus Hermeticum, in der Gnosis und in der Ostkirche"—*EJ*, 1943, Bd. X, S. 266 sq.; Eliade, *Das Heilige*, S. 83 sq. (on humi positio); C. G. Jung, *The psychology of the transference*, Princeton, 1974, pp. 105 sq. (on the iconography of the "Rosarium philosophorum").

[7] J. G. Jennings, *The Vedantic Buddhism of the Buddha*, Oxford, 1947, pp. 623 sq.; A. K. Warder, "On the relationships between early Buddhism and other contemporary systems,"—*Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, vol. 18, N.1, 1956, pp. 58, 61 etc. The evidence of DN XVI, 6.8-9 describes the attainment of parinibbāna in a peculiar manner. Buddha's ascent (vuṭṭhahitvā) along the nine states (anupubba = vihāra)—the four stages of absorption (jhāna) and the five subsequent levels (āyatana)—is followed by his descent from the ninth state to the first, then by the second ascent to the fourth jhāna, after which "he immediately expired" (*Dialogues of the Buddha*, tr. by T. W. and C. A. F. Rhys Davids, pt. II, London, 1910, pp. 173-175; cf. F. Heiler, "Die Buddhistischen Versenkungsstufen" in: *Aufsätze zur Kultur- und Sprachgeschichte vornehmlich des Orients, E. Kuhn zum 70. Geburtstag gewidmet*, München, 1916, S. 357-387). This metaphorical ascent is accompanied by more traditional "spatial" signs of the gods' respect for the departing Teacher (heavenly flowers and sandal-wood powder falling from the sky all over his body; streams of water from the sky extinguishing his funeral pyre; etc.—DN XVI. 5. 2-3; 6. 23).

[8] Cf. J. Gonda, *Aspects of early Viṣṇuism*, Utrecht, 1954, pp. 55 sq.; F. B. J. Kuiper, "The three strides of Viṣṇu" in: *Indological Studies in honor of W. N. Brown*, New Haven, 1962, pp. 137-151. Cf. also the role of Agni supporting the heaven with the help of firewood (RV III. 5. 10).

[9] See O. Viennot, *Le culte de l'arbre dans l'Inde ancienne*, Paris, 1954, pp. 9 sq.; 75 sq.; E. O. James, *The tree of life. An archeological study*. Leiden, 1966, pp. 129 sq. etc.; E. A. S. Butterworth, *The tree at the navel of the world*, Berlin, 1970; V. N. Toporov, "L'albero universale" in: *Ricerche semiotiche*—Torino, 1973, pp. 148-209; J. W. Taylor, "Tree worship",—*The Mankind Quarterly*, v. 20, N. 1-2, 1979, pp. 79-141; etc. Cf. also iconographic material in R. Cook, *The tree of life. Image for the cosmos*, N.Y. 1974; G. B. Ladner, "Medieval and modern understanding

of symbolism: a comparison''—*Speculum*, v. 54, No. 2, 1979, pp. 250 sq., figures
1-24 etc. There are numerous reflections of the tree symbolism in folklore and fine
literature (e.g. in: L. Tolstoy's *War and peace*, R. M. Rilke's *Ich liebe meines Wesens
Dunkelstunden*; B. Pasternak's *Zimnie prazdniki* a.o.). Cf. below, note 11. On
analogous function of some other symbols (ladder, cross, thread) cf. e.g., M.
Pulver, "Jesu Reigen und Kreuzigung nach den Johannes-Akten"—*EJ*, 1942,
Bd. XIV, S. 174; Beirnaert, *Le symbolisme*, S. 48 sq.; M. Eliade, "Mythes et sym-
boles de la corde"—*EJ*, 1960, Bd. XXIX, S. 109-137, esp. 114 sq.; Th. H.
Gaster, *Myth, legend and custom in the Old Testament*, v. I, N.Y. 1975, pp. 184 sq.;
V. N. Toporov, "Ob odnom klasse simvoličeskix tekstov", in: *Balcano-Balto-
Slavica*, Moskva, 1979, pp. 116 sq.; D. I. Lauf, "Maitreyas Herabkunft und
Stufenwege zum Licht"—*EJ*. 1981, S. 377 sq., etc.

   [10] "The sound *Aum* .... is verily the higher and the lower *Brahman* ... if he
meditates on the element (*a*), he comes quickly to the earth (after death) .... (if
he meditates on this) as of two elements he attains the mind (manasi) .... the
intermediate space ... But if he meditates on the highest person with the three
elements of the syllable *Aum* (*a, u, m*), he becomes one with the light .... He is led
.... to the world of Brahmā" (*Principal Upaniṣads*, p. 665). Cf. further, PU V, 7
(*ibid.*, p. 666): "With the *ṛg* (verses) (one attains) this world, with the *yajus* (for-
mulas) .... the interspace and with the *sāman* (chants) .... that which is tranquil,
unaging, immortal, fearless and supreme." Other evidence (MaU 1 sq.) connects
a-u-m with past, present and future, respectively; with the cognition (prajña) of
external objects, of internal objects and a "mass of cognition" (prajñāna = ghana),
etc.; while the whole syllable is equal with ātman "which cannot be spoken of, into
which the world is resolved, benign, non-dual" (*ibid.*, pp. 695 sq.; cf. below note
97). The corresponding problem has been discussed at the earlier Eranos meetings
(cf. e.g., papers of P. Masson-Oursel, C. A. F. Rhys Davids, J. Przyluski in *EJ*,
1936, 1937, Bd. IV, V.).

   [11] Cf. the Buddhist iconography: V. N. Toporov, "Zametki o buddijskom
izobrazitel'nom iskusstve v svjazi s semiotikoj kosmologičeskix predstavlenij", in:
Works on semiotics, II, Tartu, 1965, pp. 225 sq.; E. D. Ogneva, "Struktura tibet-
skoj ikony" in: *Problema kanona v drevnem i srednevekovom iskusstve Azii i Afriki*,
Moskva, 1973, pp. 111 a.o. Analogous regularities pertain to the sphere of
sculpture (cf. P. Mus, *Barabudur*, N.Y. 1978, pp. 633 sq.; B. Rowland, "Religious
art East and West",—*History of religions*, v. 2, N. 1, 1962, pp. 21 sq.—on Bud-
dha's "cosmological stature") and architecture—cf. e.g. the structure of
Barabudur temple as the replica of the macrocosm (H. Zimmer, *Kunstform und
Yoga im Indischen Kultbild*, Berlin, 1926, S. 94 etc.; Mus, *Op. cit.*, p. 42 sq.; cf.
Rowland, *Op. cit.*, pp. 26 sq.; Anagarika Govinda, "Quelques aspects du sym-
bolisme des Stupa"—*Samadhi. Cahiers d'études bouddhiques*, v. 8, N. 3-4, 1974, pp.
154-171; etc.). One can find similar regularities in Christian art: cf. cor-
respondence of elements in the icon, where the three zones—resp. heaven, church
(as the connecting link) and earth (or hall)—can be usually distinguished (This
device undergoes a certain modification in Renaissance painting, due to the intro-
duction of the three-dimensional representation based on the horizontal scheme
as, e.g. in Fra Angelico's "The last Judgement"; cf. I. Danilova, *Ot srednix vekov
k vozroždeniju. Složenie xudožestvennoj sistemy kartiny kvatročento*, Moskva, 1975, pp. 39
sq.). We find here also motifs of the tree, the ladder, etc. (cf. particularly a
dynamic image of ascent and sinners' fall in the icon "Ladder of St. Jacob" from
St. Catherine's Monastery in Sinai; the composition of J. Bosch's triptychs; etc.).
Cf. R. Cavendish, *Vision of Heaven and Hell*. N.Y., 1977. Cf. also concerning corre-

sponding symbolism in church architecture; J. Sauer, *Symbolik des Kirchengebäudes und seiner Ausstattung in der Auffassung des Mittelalters*. Freiburg, 1924; G. Bandmann, *Mittelalterliche Architektur als Bedeutungsträger*, Berlin, 1951; etc.

¹² See, for example: L. Jung, "Fallen angels in Jewish, Christian and Moham-medan Literature. A study in comparative Folklore"—*The Jewish Quarterly Review*, N.S. v. 15, 1924/25, pp. 467-502; v. 16, 1925/26, pp. 45-88; 171-205; 287-336; M. Riemschneider, *Der Wettergott*. Leipzig, 1956, S. 35 sq. (on Hittite, Greek and other traditions).

¹³ Cf. the persistent emphasis on the advantages of inferior, dependent, despised state already in earlier Christian sources. We should mention, especially, the cases when humiliation is explicitly correlated to perfection and appears as a condition for elvation: Mt. 18.4: "Let a man humble himself ... and he will be the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven"; Mt. 23, 12: "whoever exalts himself will be humbled; and whoever humbles himself will be exalted"; Lc. 14, 11; I Pet. 5.5; Jas. 4. 6; 10; see also: Mt. 5. 3 sq.; Lc. 4. 18; 6. 20 sq.; I. Cor. 1. 28; etc. The device of intentional self-denigration and humiliation, of hiding one's own merits, etc. is widespread in monastic tradition. Cf. e.g., W. Bousset, "Die verborgene Heilige"—*Archiv für Religionswissenschaft* Bd. XXI, Leipzig—Berlin, 1922, S. 1-17 (the evidence of "Historia Lausiaca", Rufinus' Historia monachorum", etc.). Cf. also Beirnaert, *Symbolism*, S. 62-63. We shall touch upon similar traits below, with respect to the image of the "Fool for Christ's sake".

¹⁴ See R. K. Mookerji, *Ancient Indian education (Brahmanical and Buddhist)*. Delhi, 1960, pp. 93 sq., 184 sq., H.-W. Genichen, "Zum Meister = Jungen = Verhältnis im Hinduismus", in: *Wort und Religion. Kalima ha dini*. Stuttgart, 1969, S. 340-353; W. O. Kaelber, "The Brahmacārin: homology and continuity in Brāhmaṇic religion"—*History of Religions*, vol. 21, No. 1, 1981, pp. 77-99; J. D. Mlecko, "The Guru in Hindu tradition"—*Numen*, vol. XXIX, Fasc. 1, 1982, pp. 33-61; etc.

¹⁵ M. Mayrhofer, *Kurzgefasstes Etymologisches Wörterbuch des Altindischen*, Bd. I, Heidelberg, 1956, S. 105; M. Monier-Williams, *A Sanskrit-English dictionary*, Oxford, 1951, p. 201; see also: A. B. Keith, *The religion and philosophy of the Veda and Upanishads*, Cambridge, Mass., 1925, p. 489; L. Renou [Sur le sens du mot upanishad], in: "Séance du 9 février 1945"—*Journal Asiatique*, t. 234, 1943/45, pp. 449-450; M. Winternitz, *A History of Indian literature*, v. I, Calcutta, 1959, p. 211; P. Deussen, *The philosophy of the Upanishads*, N.Y., 1966, pp. 13 sq.; etc.

¹⁶ Monier-Williams, *Op. cit.*, p. 215; cf. G. Oldenberg. "Vedische Unter-suchungen"—*ZDMG*, Bd. 50, 1896, S. 457 sq. (deriving upaniṣad from upa-ās); idem, *Die Lehre der Upanishaden und die Anfänge des Buddhismus*, Göttingen, 1923, S. 134, 300 (Anm. 97; 98); E. Senart, "Upās—upaniṣad", in: *Florilegium .... Melchior de Vogüe*, Paris, 1909, pp. 575-587; M. Falk, Upāsana et Upaniṣad—*Rocznik Orientalistyczny*, t. 13, 1937, pp. 129-158; etc.

¹⁷ With respect to this evidence, W. D. Whitney's interpretation of Naciketa's second wish as being opposed to the upanishadic spirit seems to be unfounded (W. D. Whitney, "The Kaṭha-Upanishad"—*Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, v. XXI, 1890, pp. 91 sq.)—see: J. S. Helfer, "The initiatory structure of the Kaṭhopaniṣad"—*History of religions*, v. 7, N. 4, 1968, pp. 350 sq.

¹⁸ *Principal Upaniṣads*, p. 599.

¹⁹ Helfer, *Op. cit.*; pp. 348-367; see also: B. Faddegon, *De interpretatie der Kāṭhaka-Upaniṣad*, Amsterdam, 1923; J. N. Rawson, *The Kaṭha Upaniṣad*, Oxford, 1934; P. Deussen, *Sechzig Upaniṣad's des Veda*, Leipzig, 1938. S. 261 sq.; F. Weller, *Versuch einer Kritik der Kaṭhopaniṣad*, Berlin, 1953; H. D. Velankar, "The Ṛgvedic

origin of the story of Naciketas (Rv. X. 135)", in: *Mélanges d'indianisme à la mémoire de L. Renou*, Paris, 1968, pp. 763-772; R. Rustomji, "Bargaining with death in Sanskrit literature", in: *Literature East and West*, v. 18, n. 2-4 (*Encounters with Death in Asian literature*), 1974, pp. 148 sq.; etc. See also concerning the "spiritual" and initiatory functions of Death: M. Eliade, *Birth and rebirth: the religious meanings of initiation in human culture*, N.Y. 1958; J. B. Long, "The Death that ends death in Hinduism and Buddhism", in: *Death: the final stage of growth*, N.Y. 1975, pp. 52 sq.; *Religious encounters with Death. Insights from the history and anthropology of religion*, ed. by F. E. Reynolds and E. H. Waugh, University Park and London, 1977, particularly: M. Eliade "Mythologies of Death: An introduction", pp. 18. 21 (on M. Heidegger's approach); D. R. Kinsley, "The Death that conquers Death": Dying to the world in Medieval Hinduism, *ibid.*; p. 102, etc.; G. D. Bond, "Theravada Buddhism's meditations on death and the symbolism of initiatory death"—*History of religions*, vol. 19, N. 3, 1980, pp. 237 sq.; 249 sq. etc. The motif of the hero's journey, connected with the search for treasure or remedy, with certain errand, etc. is widespread in folk-lore (cf., e.g. the motif of hero's departure: V. Propp, *Morphology of the folktale*, Austin and London, 1968, pp. 39 sq.; E. Meletinskij, *Geroj volšebnoj skazki*, Moskva, 1958, pp. 213-255, on the "low" hero of fairy-tales, etc.). We find a motif of pilgrimage where the hero's spiritual quest results in subsequent transformation, beginning with the most archaic epic texts down to modern fiction (as in H. Hesse's novels). These pilgrimages are, anyhow, marked by metaphorical (if not spatial) rise and descent. Such, for example, is the ancient Babylonian epic of Gilgamesh who goes in search of immortality through the land of darkness and the waters of Death (cf. particularly the tablets X-XI of Ninevian version: cf. e.g. F. M. Th. de Liagre Böhl, "Die Fahrt nach dem Lebenskraut"—*Archiv Orientální*, v. 18, N. 1-2, 1950, S. 107-122). On the symbolism of entering water cf. also: L. Beirnaert, "La dimension mystique dans le sacramentalisme chrétien"—*EJ*, 1949, Bd. XVII, S. 279-280. Cf. concerning corresponding themes (particularly in Dante's Divina Commedia): M. Baudkin, *Archetypal patterns in poetry*, N.Y., 1958, pp. 81 sq.; J. Campbell, *The hero with a thousand faces*, London, 1975, pp. 90 sq.; 299 sq.; I. Baumer, *Wallfahrt als Handlungsspiel. Ein Beitrag zum Verständnis religiösen Handelns*. Berne-Frankfurt, 1977; M. L. Peel, "The "Decensus ad Inferos" in "The teachings of Silvanus" (CG VII, 4)"—*Numen*, v. 36, fasc. 1, 1979, pp. 23-49; D. A. Deeming *Mythology. The voyage of the hero*, N.Y., 1980; D. L. Miller, "The two sandals of Christ: Descent into history and into Hell"—*EJ*. 1981, pp. 154 sq.; U. Mann "Geisthöhe und Seelentiefe. Die vertikale Achse der numinosen Bereiche"—*ibid.*, S. 15 sq.; A. C. Yu, "Two literary examples of religious pilgrimage: The Commedia and the Journey to the West"—*History of Religions*—v. 22, no. 3, 1983, pp. 202-230; etc.; concerning some more general aspects of the problem: C. G. Jung, "Die verschiedene Aspekte der Wiedergeburt"—*EJ*, 1939, Bd. VII, S. 420 sq.; M. Eliade, "Mystère et régénération spirituelle dans les religions extra-européens"—*EJ*, 1954, Bd. XXIII, p. 90, etc. Cf. also with respect to the meaning of a pilgrim's transference in space: H. Corbin, "Pour une morphologie de la spiritualité Shî'ite"—*EJ*, 1960, Bd. XXIX, pp. 100 sq.; Ju. M. Lotman, "O ponjatii geografičeskogo prostranstva v russkix srednevekovyx tekstax", in: *Works on semiotics*, II, Tartu, 1965, pp. 210-216. W. Harms, *Homo viator in bivio*, München, 1970; A. Ja. Gurevič, *Kategorii srednevekovoj kul'tury*, Moskva, 1972, pp. 65 sq.; etc. An example of corresponding spatial-ethic transference is presented in the traditional Hebrew usage of words "ascent" (ʿaliāh) and "descent" (i̯erīdāh) designating, respectively, setting foot in the land of Israel and leaving it (the usage

remaining so relevant that the "rise"—"descent" dichotomy, when uttered in Hebrew, would be unequivocally understood by every Israeli to be an allusion to the burning social question of his country's life). The notion of pilgrimage is analogously expressed here as "ascent on foot" (ᶜali̞āh l̕regel). One can note that its usual designation in European languages (cf. Lat. "peregrinatio" from "per-ager") is connected with the notion of transgressing the space (see below, note 33 on *tr̥*), while another tradition (cf. Fr. "paumier", Rus. "palomnik") has another significant connotation—the image of a tree.

²⁰ *Principal Upanisads*, pp. 412-413.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 797.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 927.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 404; cf. *The Chāndogya upaniṣad*, by Swāmī Swāhānanda, Madras, 1956, pp. 267-268.

²⁴ Cf. W. Ruben, "Über die Debatten in den alten Upaniṣad's"—*ZDMG*. Bd. 83, 1929, S. 241 sq.; A. Syrkin, "Notes on the Buddha's Threats in the Dīgha Nikāya"—*The Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies*. vol. 7, No 1, 1984, pp. 150 sq.

²⁵ *Principal Upanisads*, p. 223.

²⁶ We are not dealing here with the aesthetic aspect of such ambiguity—the combination of curse and grace in Kaṭha; of cruelty and virtue in Chāndogya; of threats and salutary admonitions in Br̥hadāraṇyaka; etc. One can suppose that such contradictions brought forward by literary text can lead to the "short-circuit" of opposite emotions and thus serve as an instrument of aesthetic effect (close to "catharsis"). Cf. L. Vygotskij, *Psixologija iskusstva*, Moskva, 1968, pp. 270 sq.; A. Syrkin, "Zametki o stilistike rannix upanišad"—*Vestnik drevnej istorii*, 1971, No. 2, pp. 99-100. The possible substitution of the guru or brahman precep-tor for the father figure in Hinduist tradition (e.g. Man. II 146 sq; 170 sq—see above) permits R. P. Goldman to suggest the elements of Oedipal conflict in respective (pupil-teacher) relations. Cf. R. P. Goldman, "Fathers, sons and gurus: Oedipal conflict in the Sanskrit epics"—*Journal of Indian Philosophy* V. 6, 1978. pp. 325-392.

²⁷ Cf. E. Hopkins, *Epic mythology*, Strassburg, 1915, pp. 197 sq.; J. Gonda, *Aspects*, p. 124; P. Hacker, "Zur Entwicklung der Avatāralehre"—*Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde Süd = und Ostasiens und Archiv für Indische Philosophie*, Bd. IV, 1960, S. 52 sq. etc. Different functions of this universal device (fertilization, par-ticipating in the sacrifice, founding a kingdom—i.e. in ancient Corean legends) as well as cases of "substitutional" descent (see for example, Rev. 21.10, on see-ing "the holy city of Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God"; or bring-ing down to earth the shrine of Viṣṇu-Raṅganātha in Sanskrit and Tamil texts—cf. D. D. Shulman, *Tamil temple myths*, Princeton, 1980, p. 49) each present a com-plicated problem and cannot be discussed here. The same applies to different aspects of the Saiour's manifestation (cf. below) manifoldly reflected in the history of religions. (cf. e.g., some examples in: W. Ruben, *Krishna. Konkordanz und Kom-mentar der Motive seines Heldenlebens*, Istambul, 1944, S. 48-49.).

²⁸ Cf. A. Macdonell, *Vedic mythology*, Strassburg, 1897, pp. 37 sq.; R. G. Bhan-darkar, *Vaṣṇavism, Śaivism and minor religious systems*, Strassburg, 1913; Hopkins, *Op. cit.*, pp. 202 sq.; Gonda, *Aspects*; A. Daniélou, *Le polythéisme hindou*, Paris, 1960, pp. 229 sq.; etc.

²⁹ Monier-Williams, p. 999; Gonda, *Aspects*, pp. 54-55 (a passage from Nirukta 12. 18: viṣṇur viśater vā, vyaśnoter vā) etc.

³⁰ See Gonda, *Aspects*, pp. 68 sq. on the meaning of Vedic uru = .

³¹ Cf. *Der Rig-Veda*, übers v. K. F. Geldner, II T., Cambridge, Mass., 1951, p. 270. The variability of Viṣṇu's images (especially as a dwarf) is associated, in V. Machek's opinion, with magic (V. Machek, "Origin of the god Viṣṇu"—*Archiv Orientálni*, v. 28, 1960, pp. 105 sq.).

³² The genetic correspondences of these fusions, so important in later Vishnuite mythology and ritual (e.g., in sects of pañcaratrin, bhāgavata, etc.), remain unclear in certain points. Moreover, the problems of Viṣṇu-Nārāyaṇa, Viṣṇu-Vāsudeva, etc. are subject to controversy (cf. Bhandarcar, *Op. cit.*, pp. 30 sq.; Gonda, *Aspects*, pp. 160 sq.; etc.). One can note that, although worshipping Viṣṇu beside other Hindu gods has survived till the present time, his cult as the unique embodiment of highest deity (a principle in a way originating in Vedic henotheism—cf. Macdonell, *Op. cit.*, pp. 16-17) proved to be much more important in the history of Vishnuism.

³³ Cf. Hacker, *Op. cit.*, pp. 547-570, particularly pp. 549 sq., 558 sq. on corresponding usage of prādurbhāva ("manifestation"), avataraṇa, bhārāvataraṇa ("Abwälzen der Last von der Erde"), etc. It is noteworthy that the verb *tṝ*, tarati ("cross over", "surpass", "reach the end", etc.) became one of the main designations of spiritual salvation (as crossing over worldly sorrows, the flood of existence, of saṃsāra, etc.), while its causative tārayati refers respectively to saving others. Cf. KtU I, 1.12; 17 (tarati janma-mṛtyū—"crosses over birth and death"); MuU III, 2.9; PU VI, 8 (yo 'smākam avidyāyāḥ param pāraṃ tārayasi—"Thou .... who does take us across to the other shore of ignorance"), etc. (*Principal Upaniṣads*, pp. 602, 668, etc.). This usage is no less widespread in Buddhist tradition, in the notion of a person who has crossed the world of sorrows, crossed "the flood", attained nibbāna—tiṇṇa, oghatiṇṇa, etc. (DN. XXV, 21; Dhp. 195; Sn 21, 178, 823, 1082, 1145, etc.). Cf. also the functions of Tārā deity, particularly in Mahāyāna Buddhism. See I. B. Horner, *The early Buddhist theory of man perfected*, London, 1936, pp. 259 sq.; E. Conze, "Buddhist saviours", in: *Thirty years of Buddhist studies*", Oxford, 1967, p. 35, etc. An evident connection of tṝ with tīrtha ("passage", "ford", etc.—cf. Mayrhofer, *Op. cit.*, Bd. I, pp. 480, 507; D. L. Eck, "India's *tīrthas*: "crossings" in sacred geography"—*History of Religions*, vol. 20, No. 4, 1981, pp. 323 sq.; 329 sq.; etc.) makes this root most significant in Jaina tradition as well, where the concept of tīrthankara ("creating a passage", "ford-finder"—an epithet testified similarly with respect to Viṣṇu and Śiva) designates the chief Jaina saint preaching salvation (cf. below, note 58). Cf. C. J. Bleeker, *The sacred bridge*, Leiden, 1963, S. 80 sq.; 84 sq. ("Die religiöse Bedeutung der Brücke").

³⁴ Cf. Monier-Williams, p. 99.

³⁵ See, e.g., S. N. Farquhar, *An outline of the religious literature of India*, Oxford, 1920, p. 231; J. Filliozat, "Les dates du Bhāgavatapurāṇa et du Bhāgavatamāhāt-mya", in: *Indological studies in honor of W. N. Brown*, New Haven, 1962, pp. 70-77; U. Agrawal. "Worship of Vishnu. His incarnation in India in the medieval period"—*Oriental Art*, vol. 16, No. 3, 1970, pp. 252-258, etc.

³⁶ Hopkins, *Op. cit.*, pp. 209 sq.; 217 sq.; Bhandarkar, *Op. cit.*, pp. 41-42; Gonda, *Aspects*, pp. 124 sq.; Daniélou, *Op. cit.*; pp. 251 sq.

³⁷ Cf. M. Winternitz, *A history of Indian literature*, v. III, Calcutta, 1959, pp. 60 sq.

³⁸ The present world period in Indian cosmology (kalpa) is named varāha after this exploit.

³⁹ It is noteworthy that certain supernatural qualities, bringing Hiraṇyakaśipu, Bali and other demons to power and serving a cause for Viṣṇu's avatāras, were

obtained as a boon for great austerities (tapas), humiliation, etc. or for a kind of "descent" (cf. above). However, regarding asuras, these trials bring them no benefit, but rather lead them to temporary "social" ascent accompanied as a rule by moral degradation. This result is contrary to that of pious men and to the gods themselves (see below). Cf. SB II. 2.2.6 on brāhmaṇas as the "human gods" whose descent leads to real perfection (cf. SB II. 2.2.9. sq.: "The gods were left inferior. They went on practising and practising austerities, hoping that they might be able to overcome their enemies, the mortal Asuras ... and having ... become immortal, and unconquerable, they overcame their mortal conquerable enemies"—*The Śatapatha-brāhmaṇa*, tr. by J. Eggeling, pt. I, Delhi, 1966, pp. 310-311). This difference corresponds to the traditional opposition between gods and asuras in Vedic and epic evidence. Cf. above (ChU VIII, 7 sq.) concerning opposite results of Indra's and Virocana's studies—not only because of asuras' inherent wickedness, but also because of the god's scheming (cf. MtU VII, 9-10). This opposition of the genuine gods' and false asuras' ascent, in connection with moral superiority of the former and inferiority of the latter, is expressed most explicitly with subsequent ethical deducation in SB IX, 5.1. 16-17: "The gods spake nothing but truth, and Asuras nothing but untruth. And the gods, speaking the truth diligently, were very contemtible, and very poor: whence he who speaks the truth diligently, becomes indeed very contemptible, and very poor; but in the end he assuredly prospers, for the gods indeed prospered. And the Asuras speaking untruth ... were very prosperous: whence he who speaks untruth diligently, thrives indeed ... and becomes very prosperous; but in the end he assuredly comes to naught, for the Asuras indeed came to naught" (*ibid.*, pt. IV, pp. 257-258).

⁴⁰ According to separate versions, with his third step Viṣṇu pierces the roof of the universe and intrudes into Brahman's Satyaloka. Thereafter, the divine river Gaṅgā flows from the crevice down to the earth, as a tribute to his deed (cf. BP VIII. 21. 1-3; Kūrma purāṇa I. 16. 56; Vāmana purāṇa 65.32-34). Here we come across a well-known motif in Hindu mythology and iconography (cf. the famous relief "Descent of the Gaṅgā" in Mamallapuram), a motif also pertinent to our theme—a benefactory descent of the sacred river from heaven to earth (cf. note 27). The "mother Gaṅgā" is often personified in Hindu tradition as a river-goddess, wife of Viṣṇu, of Śiva, etc. Cf. e.g., S. G. Darian, *The Ganges in myth and history*, Honolulu, 1978, esp. pp. 17 sq.

⁴¹ Kṛṣṇa, son of Devakī appears also in ChU III, 17. 6 where he himself receives from Ghora Āṅgirasa an admonition leading to final liberation. Cf. S. K. De, "The Vedic and the epic Kṛṣṇa, " in: *Aspects of Sanskrit literature*, Calcutta, 1959, pp. 31 sq.

⁴² Cf. Bhandarkar, *Op. cit.*, pp. 35 sq.; R. Garbe, *Indien und Christentum*, Tübingen, 1914, S. 218; De, *Op. cit.*, pp. 31-35; A. Ch. Chakravarti, *The story of Kṛṣṇa in Indian literature*, Calcutta, 1976; etc. Certain traits of Kṛṣṇa's image led to numerous comparisons with Christ—attempts which were sometimes justified from the typological point of view (motifs such as persecution of the divine child, pastor-saviour, etc.). They are, however, doubtful with respect to the possibility of genetic influence (e.g., thanks to the presumed activity of early Christians in India)—cf. A. Keith, "The child Krishna".—*Journal of Royal Asiatic Society*, 1908, pp. 169-175; Garbe, *Op. cit.*, S. 201 sq.; Hopkins, *Op. cit.*, p. 216, n. 1; etc.; cf. also E. G. Suhr, "Krishna and Mithra as Messiahs"—*Folklore*, vol. 77, 1966, pp. 205-221.

⁴³ We find Buddha's iconographic representation, preserving some traits typical of him, among other Viṣṇu's incarnations in a Sirpur shrine (ca. VIII cent.

A.D.)—cf. Bhandarkar, *Op. cit.*, p. 45. Concerning some characteristic modifica-
tions of Buddha's image within the framework of different traditions cf. P. H.
Pott, "Plural forms of Buddhist iconography", in: *India Antiqua*, Leiden, 1947,
pp. 284 sq. Cf. also A. J. Gail, "Buddha as avatāra Viṣṇus im Spiegel der
Purāṇas", in: *XVII. Deutscher Orientalistentag, Würzburg, 1968*, T. III, Wiesbaden,
1969, S. 917-923 (evidence of BP I. 3. 24; MP 24. 47; Viṣṇu purāṇa IV, 9. 8,
etc.). One can add that Buddha's image entered Christian (St. Ioasaph) tradition
as well. See, for example, P. P. Alfaric, "La vie chrétienne du Buddha"—*Journal
Asiatique*, XI sér., t. X, 1917, pp. 269-288.

⁴⁴ Buddhist dogmatics regard being born in the form of a god as the result of
certain merits, which lift the mortal to a higher level. The latter, however, yields
to the complete cessation of rebirths—the state of an arahant, of Buddha. See,
e.g., the superiority of arahant over the previous state of anāgāmin ("non-
returner")—a designation of the person who is born in a higher world of gods and
does not return to earth, though he has not yet attained nibbāna. The motif of
Buddha's admonition to the gods is found, e.g., in Sakkapañha sutta (DN XXI),
where Sakka (or Indra, king of gods) asks him questions. In Mahāsamaya sutta
(DN XX) "the great concourse" of gods assembles to contemplate Buddha and
other arahants (cf. also signs of gods' veneration in Mahāparinibbāna (DN XVI
5.2 sq. etc.). Concering the role of corresponding beliefs in Buddhism see: Swami
Jagadiswarananda, "Buddhism and the Vedas"—*The Scholar*, v. 7, N. 7, 1932,
pp. 377-386; J. Masson, *La religion populaire dans le canon bouddhique pāli*, Louvain,
1942; T. P. Bhattacharya, "Brahma cult and Buddhism"—*Journal of the Bihar
Research Society*, v. 42, pt. 1, 1956, pp. 91-115; B. Mal, *The religion of Buddha and
its relation to Upanishadic thought*, Hoshiarpur, 1958, pp. 262 sq., P. R. Barua,
"Buddha and the gods"—*Journal of the Asiatic Society of Pakistan*, v. 14, N. 2, 1969,
pp. 113-128; F. Story, *Gods and the universe in Buddhist perspective*, Kandy, 1972,
K. R. Norman, "The Buddha's view of Devas", in: *Beiträge zur Indienforschung E.
Waldsschmidt zum 80. Geburtstag gewidmet*, Berlin, 1977, S. 329-336; etc. Analogous
reception of Hindu gods (like Indra, Kṛṣṇa, etc.) is also characteristic of Jainism,
with its similar hierarchy placing these gods, still subject to the karmic world,
lower than the tīrthaṅkaras, who have completely destroyed their karmas (cf. *The
world of Jainism*, ed. by V. Pandey, Bombay, 1976, p. 86).

⁴⁵ Cf. E. Abegg, *Der Messiaglaube in Indien und Iran*, Berlin und Leipzig, 1928,
S. 39 sq.; J. Przyluski, "La croyance au Messia dans l'Inde et l'Iran."—*Revue
de l'histoire des religions*, t. 100, N. 1, 1929, pp. 3 sq.; Daniélou, *Op. cit.*, p. 277;
Suhr, *Op. cit.*; cf. Below, note 49.

⁴⁶ Cf. Gonda, *Aspects*, p. 125; *Chapters in Indian civilization*, v. I, Dubuque, 1970,
p. 89 (A. Bharati); A. Syrkin, "K xarakteristike induistskogo panteona," in:
Oriental Studies, II. 1, Tartu, 1973, pp. 162-163; etc.

⁴⁷ *The Bhagavad Gītā*, transl. by F. Edgerton, Cambridge, Mass., 1972, p. 23.

⁴⁸ Concerning corresponding time dimensions cf. particularly: S. Schayer, *Con-
tributions to the problem of time in Indian philosophy*. Krakow, 1938; M. Eliade, "Le
temps et l'éternité dans la pensée indienne"—*EJ*, 1951, Bd. XX, S. 219-252; A.
Bareau, "The notion of time in early Buddhism" in: *East and West*, v. 7, N. 4,
1957, pp. 353-364; K. K. Mandal, *A comparative study of the concepts of space and time
in Indian thought*, Varanasi, 1968; A. Wayman, "No time, great time and profane
time in Buddhism" in: *Myths and symbols. Studies in honor of M. Eliade*, Chicago,
1969, pp. 47-62; W. C. Beane "The cosmological structure of mythical time: kāli-
śakti" in: *History of religions*, v. 13, N. 1, 1973, pp. 54-83; J. Filliozat, "Le temps
et l'espace dans les conceptions du monde indien", in: *Laghuprabandhāḥ*, Leiden

1974, pp. 170-184; etc. See also: *Philosophy East and West*, vol. 24, N. 2, 1974; *Time and temporality*, particularly pp. 161 sq. (papers of R. Panikkar, R. Puligandla, a.o.).

⁴⁹ At the same time the last (Kalki) image can also be treated as mixed—anthropomorphic-theriomorphic—cf. his representations as a man with a horse's head, or even as a horse (Abegg, *Op. cit.*, ill. I to p. 47). A certain ambiguity also marks the ethical image of Kalki whose salutary mission is accompanied by terrifying acts of destruction. The meaning of "Kalki" ("foul", "wicked", etc.) and its possible connotations with ideas of destruction, death, etc. (cf. Kāla) are suggestive in this respect. Cf. Monier-Williams, p. 262; Mayrhofer, *Op. cit.*, Bd. I, p. 183; see Abegg, *Op. cit.*, pp. 47, 139 sq.; Przyluski, *Op. cit.*, pp. 4 sq.

⁵⁰ It is clear from the present exposition that we are dealing first and foremost with canonical and didactic evidence on the "spiritual" salvation. The problem of "physical" salvation, though closely connected with sacral thematics (and, as Viṣṇu's avatāras show, particularly with "salutary descents") more often passes from canonical texts to folklore, epics and other literary genres.

⁵¹ Cf. Hopkins, *Op. cit.*, p. 202; L. Renou, "L'ambiguïté du vocabulaire du Ṛgveda", in: *Journal Asiatique*, t. 231, 1939, pp. 224 a.o. (valuable evidence of ambivalent lexical usage, with respect to some Vedic gods); Syrkin, *K xarakteristike*, pp. 162; etc. Cf. below, note 107.

⁵² Cf. A. Syrkin, "O poètike "Gitagovindy" in: *Narody Azii i Afriki*, 6, 1970, p. 102; L. Siegel, *Sacred and profane dimensions of love in Indian traditions as exemplified in the Gītagovinda of Jayadeva*, Delhi, 1978, p. 256 (cf. *ibid.*, pp. 98 sq. about the fusion of the heroic and the erotic sentiments in the depiction of Kṛṣṇa).

⁵³ Speaking of Kṛṣṇa's morals W. Ruben (*Krishna*, S. 253 sq., 284) comes to the conclusion that in spite of his positive role he displays a lack of such altruistic traits as constancy, patience, charity. Cf. Suhr, *Op. cit.*, pp. 211 sq., C. G. Hospital. "Paradox and divine wickedness in the Krishnakarnamrita: reflections on the uses of discrepant symbols" in: *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, XV, 1-2, 1980, pp. 59-71, etc.

⁵⁴ The motif of subjugation in love is particularly expressed in Gītagovinda: "like a slave" (11.22) Kṛṣṇa worships his beloved's feet, helps to restore her toilet (10.7; 24.17 sq.), etc. His love-effusions sometimes sound quite masochistic—see 10.3 ("give me a wound with the arrows that are your sharp nails ..."); 10.8 ("place the noble sprout of your foot as an ornament upon my head..."); cf. 10.11; 11.2; 12.11; etc. See Siegel, *Op. cit.*, pp. 93 sq.; 274; 279; A. J. Syrkin, "Interpretations of "Gītagovinda" and their analogies" in: *Darshana International*, v. 19 N. 4, 1979, p. 15.

The following abbreviations are used:

AN – Aṅguttara Nikāya; Bg – Bhagavadgītā; BP – Bhāgavata purāṇa; BU – Bṛhadāraṇyaka upaniṣad; ChU – Chāndogya upaniṣad; Dhp – Dhammapada; DN – Dīgha nikāya; *EJ – Eranos Jahrbuch*; *JAOS – Journal of the American Oriental Society*; KauU – Kauṣītaki upaniṣad; KtU – Kaṭha upaniṣad; Man – Mānavadharmaśāstra; MaU – Māṇḍūkya upaniṣad; Mbh – Mahābhārata; MtU – Maitrī upaniṣad; MuU – Muṇḍaka upaniṣad; MN – Majjhima nikāya; MP – Matsya purāṇa; PS – Pāśupata sūtra; PU – Praśna upaniṣad; RV – Ṛgveda; Sn – Sutta nipata; SB – Śatapatha brāhmaṇa; SU – Śvetāśvatara upaniṣad; TB – Taittirīya brāhmaṇa; TU – Taittirīya upaniṣad; *ZDMG – Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft.*

NEUE BUDDHISTISCHE ORTHODOXIE: BEMERKUNGEN ZUR GLIEDERUNG UND ZUR REFORM DES SANGHA IN BIRMA*

Heinz Bechert

Obwohl die Theravāda-Buddhisten über einen einheitlichen kirchenrechtlichen Codex verfügen, der das kanonische Vinayapiṭaka mit den dazugehörigen Kommentaren und Subkommentaren in Pāli umfasst, lassen sich nicht unwesentliche Unterschiede in der heutigen Struktur des Sangha in Sri Lanka, Birma, Thailand und den übrigen Verbreitungsgebieten des Theravāda beobachten. Dabei haben die verschiedenen sog. buddhistischen Sekten seit jeher besondere Aufmerksamkeit auf sich gelenkt. In fast sämtlichen wissenschaftlichen Abhandlungen über den Buddhismus dieser Länder ist dieses Phänomen behandelt oder zumindest erwähnt worden. Die Existenz dieser ''Sekten'' ist wiederum in engem Zusammenhang mit dem Problem der organisatorischen Struktur dieser Gemeinschaften zu sehen, also der gegenseitigen Abhängigkeit der einzelnen Klostergemeinschaften, der Hierarchie und der geistlichen Jurisdiktion. Die meisten, vor allem die älteren Beobachter haben diese Fragen in Analogie zur Struktur christlicher Kirchen zu erfassen versucht. Sie haben dabei übersehen, dass man für eine zutreffende Analyse dieser Strukturen die zugrunde liegenden Grundsätze des kanonischen buddhistischen Rechts heranziehen und auch jeweils danach fragen muss, wie sich die einzelnen Gruppierungen in diesen Rahmen einordnen lassen.

Die ausführlichste und informationsreichste derzeit zur Frage der Struktur des birmanischen Sangha vorliegende Abhandlung ist das von John P. Ferguson herausgegebene Werk von E. Michael Mendelson, *Sangha and State in Burma*: *A Study of Monastic Sectarianism and Leadership* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1975). Für Mendelson stehen soziologische und historische Fragestellungen stark im Vordergrund; Fragen des buddhistischen Kirchenrechts treten demgegenüber zurück. Auch bereitete ihm die Auswertung des älteren westlichen Quellenmaterials erhebliche Schwierigkeiten, da die Berichte von

John Nisbet (1901), James George Scott (1909), J. A. Stewart (1949) und Maung Htin Aung (1966) teilweise widersprüchlich sind. Eine neue Behandlung dieser Thematik ist daher durchaus gerechtfertigt.

Die Sangha-Reform von 1980 und ihre Vorgeschichte

Die Situation des Sangha in Birma hat sich gegenüber der von E. M. Mendelson gegebenen Darstellung in neuester Zeit nicht unwesentlich verändert. Bekanntlich ist die Frage einer Reform des Sangha ebenso wie die des gegenseitigen Verhältnisses von Sangha und Staatsgewalt bis heute eines der Grundprobleme birmanischer Politik überhaupt geblieben. Auf die Periode einer sehr aktiven Religionspolitik in den Jahren 1949 bis 1962, die vor allem durch die Initiative des langjährigen Premierministers U Nu bestimmt war, folgte eine verhältnismässig lange Periode, in der die seit 1962 im Amt befindliche Regierung Ne Win überwiegend religionspolitische Abstinenz übte.

In der Verfassung von 1947 war grundsätzliche religiöse Neutralität der Union von Birma vorgesehen; allerdings wurde dem Buddhismus eine Sonderstellung eingeräumt. Gleichzeitig wurde — nach den negativen Erfahrungen mit der politischen Aktivität grösserer Gruppen buddhistischer Mönche in der Periode von 1920 bis 1940 — der Verfassung des Landes eine Bestimmung eingefügt, die den Missbrauch der Religion für politische Ziele ausdrücklich untersagte. Seit etwa 1956 wurde in zunehmendem Masse von politischen Gruppen und Mönchsvereinigungen die Forderung erhoben, den Buddhismus zur Staatsreligion Birmas zu machen. Die Religionspolitik des damaligen Ministerpräsidenten U Nu, der eine Reform des Sangha anstrebte, erwies sich als widerspruchsvoll und nicht geeignet, eine dauerhafte Lösung vor allem der Frage der Ordensdisziplin zu erzielen. Die Einführung des Buddhismus als Staatsreligion im Jahre 1961 führte zudem nicht zu einer Beruhigung der Lage, sondern zu einer erheblichen Verschärfung der politischen Gegensätze sowie zu einer Verschlechterung des Verhältnisses von Religion und Staat. Ich habe diese Entwicklungen an anderer Stelle ausführlich besprochen (siehe Bechert, *Buddhismus, Staat und Gesellschaft in den Ländern des Theravāda-Buddhismus*, Bd. 2,

Wiesbaden 1967, S. 74-85 und 136-147; vgl. auch Mendelson, *Sangha and State*, S. 341-355).

Am 2. März 1962 übernahm die Armee unter General Ne Win die Macht in Birma. In den offiziellen Verlautbarungen wurden nur der zunehmende Separatismus, die Nachgiebigkeit der Regierung gegenüber solchen Bestrebungen und die damit gegebene Gefährdung der Einheit der Union als Grund für den Staatsstreich angegeben. Es kann jedoch kein Zweifel daran bestehen, dass die durch innere Widersprüche gekennzeichneten religionspolitischen Experimente des Ministerpräsidenten U Nu den Entschluss der Armeeführung zum Staatsstreich wesentlich mitbestimmt haben, zumal ein Zusammenhang zwischen U Nus Religionspolitik und seiner Nachgiebigkeit gegenüber separatistischen Bestrebungen bestand. U Nu ist eine charismatische Persönlichkeit, in der praktischen Handhabung der politischen Geschäfte aber verlor er oft den Sinn für die realen Gegebenheiten. Seine Politik musste scheitern.

Im Prinzip waren die Ziele der neuen Regierung von denen U Nus gar nicht so weit entfernt. Man strebte einen Staatssozialismus mit einer besonderen birmanischen Prägung an, und man wollte eine Reform des buddhistischen Sangha herbeiführen. Allerdings waren die Methoden, mit denen man sich diesen Zielen nähern wollte, ganz unterschiedlich. Die repräsentative Demokratie wurde 1963 durch den von der ''Burma Socialist Program Party'' beherrschten Einparteienstaat ersetzt. Diese Partei erhielt eine ''Philosophie'', die als Grundlage der gesamten birmanischen Politik zu gelten hat. Diese wird als eine ''rein weltliche und menschliche Lehre'' charakterisiert, die folglich auch nicht mit religiösen Lehren in Konflikt geraten könne. Gleichwohl ist die Verwurzelung der birmanischen Staatsphilosophie in der Tradition der buddhistischen Philosophie Birmas sowie ihre Beeinflussung durch den buddhistisch-marxistischen Synkretismus unverkennbar (vgl. Bechert, *Buddhismus*, S. 150-154 und 170-173). Auch die grundsätzliche Trennung des religiösen und des weltlichen Bereichs entspricht der Überlieferung der Theravāda-Buddhisten (vgl. Bechert, ''Einige Fragen der Religionsoziologie und Struktur des südasiatischen Buddhismus'', *Internationales Jahrbuch für Religionssoziologie* 4, 1968, S. 267-275).

In den Jahren 1963 und 1964 kam es zu offenen Konflikten zwischen der Regierung Ne Win und aktiven Mönchsgruppen, die aus der Zeit der Regierung U Nu daran gewöhnt waren, auf politische Entscheidungen Einfluss zu nehmen. Im Jahre 1965 begann die Regierung Ne Win, nun selbst die von der Regierung U Nu früher ohne Erfolg versuchte Reform des Sangha in die Wege zu leiten. Damals wurde eine Konferenz von Vertretern aller Gruppen des Sangha einberufen. In einer an den Sangha gerichteten Erklärung betonte die Regierung, dass die religiöse Freiheit in dem sozialistischen System in vollem Umfang gewährleistet bleibe und dass alle Bestrebungen für die Erhaltung und die Reform des Sāsana (d.h. der buddhistischen religiösen Institutionen, besonders des Sangha) unterstützt werden sollten. Zwar wurden Anfang 1965 durch das *Revolutionary Council Act No. 1/1965* die von der Regierung U Nu im Jahre 1949 erlassenen Gesetze über die geistliche Gerichtsbarkeit (*The Vinicchaya Thana and Vinicchaya Tribunal Act*) mit der sachlich durchaus berechtigten Begründung aufgehoben, dass sie ihren Zweck nicht erfüllt hätten, doch wurden gleichzeitig Vorbereitungen für eine neue Gesetzgebung auf diesem Gebiet eingeleitet.

Durch Konferenzen mit angesehenen, überwiegend älteren Geistlichen wurde eine *All-Burma All-Sect Sangha Convention* vorbereitet, die dann vom 17. bis zum 19. März 1965 im ''Agricultural Garden'' von Hmawbi bei Rangoon tagte. Dieser Konferenz lagen Entwürfe für ein Grundgesetz des Sangha vor, durch das die hierarchische Ordnung, die geistliche Gerichtsbarkeit und die Registrierung der Mönche geregelt werden sollten. Diese Pläne konnten jedoch nicht durchgeführt werden, weil militanter Widerstand einflussreicher Mönchsgruppen dagegen sichtbar wurde und sogar grosse Mönchsdemonstrationen organisiert wurden. Es zeigte sich, dass die Regierung damals noch nicht über das Mass an Autorität verfügte, das notwendig gewesen wäre, Reformmassnahmen auch gegen den Willen reformunwilliger Mönchsgruppen durchzusetzen.

Die Regierung beschränkte sich in den folgenden anderthalb Jahrzehnten darauf, durch die Förderung des klösterlichen Bildungswesens für die Verbesserung des Bildungsstandes der Mönche zu sorgen und auch sonst Einzelmassnahmen zur Unterstützung ihr nahestehender Mönchskreise durchzuführen.

Streitigkeiten innerhalb des Mönchsordens, die ein staatliches Ein-
greifen erforderlich machten (z.B. Prozesse über Residenzrechte in
bestimmten Klöstern), wurden vom Religionsministerium ent-
schieden, dessen Tätigkeit in diesem Bereich am 28.4.1975 durch
neue Direktiven geregelt wurde. (Vgl. Bechert, *Buddhismus*, Bd. 2,
S. 155-158; Sao Htun Hmat Win, "The Unique Solidarity of the
Saṅgha Order", *The Light of the Dhamma*, Bd. 1, Heft 2 (Aug.
1981), S. 30 f.).

Ausserdem achtete die Regierung Ne Win streng darauf, dass
sich die Mönche nicht mehr, wie früher, in politische Angelegen-
heiten einmischen konnten. Man kann die Periode von 1966 bis
1978 daher als eine Zeit der weitgehenden religionspolitischen Ent-
haltsamkeit der Regierung Ne Win kennzeichnen. Viele Beobach-
ter meinten, daraus eine prinzipiell laizistische oder sogar eine reli-
gionsfeindliche Haltung ablesen zu können, zumal Birmanen auch
kaum mehr an internationalen buddhistischen Konferenzen teil-
nahmen. Solche Urteile beruhten aber auf einer grundsätzlichen
Verkennung der Entwicklung in Birma.

Dies wurde im Jahre 1979 deutlich, als die Regierung ihre
Reformpläne aus dem Jahre 1965 wieder aufnahm und nun aus
einer Position der Stärke für ihre Verwirklichung sorgte. Am 4.
August erläuterte der Staatspräsident, U Ne Win, im State Council
die Prinzipien für eine umfassende Reform des buddhistischen
Ordens. Als Leitprinzip wurde festgelegt, dass religiöse Streitfra-
gen und Prozesse in Angelegenheiten des Sangha in Zunkunft aus-
schliesslich von geistlichen, vom Sangha selbst zu bildenden
Gerichtshöfen entschieden werden, nicht vom Staat. Es sei notwen-
dig, dabei die folgenden Prinzipien zu beachten (zitiert nach Sao
Htun Hmat Win, "The Unique Solidarity", S. 31):

> 1. All the members of the Sangha (Order) shall observe and practise in
> compliance with the Vinaya Rules.
>
> 2. The Sangha shall unanimously elect and form the Boards of Juries to
> arbitrate, settle and decide all the religious disputes and monastic cases
> among the members of the Order.

Damit bleibt formal das Prinzip einer Trennung von Staat und
Religion bestehen. Gleichzeitig wurde aber eingeräumt, dass die
Durchführung der geplanten Ordensreform ohne Hilfe des Staates
nicht möglich ist. Der Innen- und Religionsminister, Brig. Gen.

Sein Lwin, der stellvertretende Minister U Ohn Kyaw sowie der Generaldirektor des "Directorate of Religious Affairs", U Kyi Kyunt, und seine Beamten wurden mit der Vorbereitung einer allgemeinen Sangha-Konvention ("Congregation of the Sangha of All Orders for Purification, Perpetuation and Propagation of the Sāsana") beauftragt. Schon'im August 1979 erhielten sie im Kabinett die Zustimmung zu ihrem Vorschlag, dass das zuständige Ministerium sich mit der Bitte um Unterstützung des Anliegens der "Purification, Perpetuation and Propagation of the Sangha" an "the eminent leading Sayadaws (Ordensälteren), the Buddhist Patriarchs" wenden sollte. Danach wurde ein "Working Executive Committee" unter Leitung von U Kyi Kyunt gebildet, das die Ziele und die Arbeitsweise der Sangha-Konvention festlegen sowie alle Einzelheiten ihrer Arbeit sorgfältig vorbereiten und für die Ausarbeitung geeigneter Beschlussvorlagen sorgen sollte. Ein "Sangha Working Committee" von 66 Ordensälteren sollte beauftragt werden, den Entwurf eines Grundgesetzes für den Sangha des Landes auszuarbeiten, das der Sangha-Konvention vorgelegt werden konnte.

Diese Verfahrensregeln wurden vom Kabinett am 24. 9. und am 14.11.1979 gebilligt. Am 21. November wurde zu ihrer Durchführung zunächst eine Konferenz einberufen, an der unter Vorsitz des Innen- und Religionsministers hochrangige Ministerialbeamte sowie die "Working Executive Members of the People's Councils" aller Teile Birmas, also die Spitzen der regionalen Verwaltungskörperschaften teilnahmen. Danach begaben sich der Minister selbst sowie acht andere hohe Beamte zu den führenden Geistlichen des Landes und legten diesen die Bitte vor, "die richtigen Mitglieder" für das "Sangha Working Committee" zu benennen. Dabei wandte man sich zunächst an die Oberhäupter der traditionellen Hierarchie des Sangha und später an führende Mönche aus den einzelnen Regionen. Es wurde grosser Wert auf die Einhaltung der in der traditionellen buddhistischen Gesellschaft Birmas üblichen Form gelegt, nach der Laien den Mönchen ihre Anliegen mit allem gebotenen Respekt als Bitte vortragen. Die offiziöse englische Übersetzung des Wortlautes dieser Bitte ist unten als Anhang I zum vorliegenden Beitrag abgedruckt.

Selbstverständlich war das Ergebnis der Befragung in gewisser Weise durch die Auswahl der befragten Personen beeinflusst. Andererseits besteht aber kein Zweifel daran, dass die Regierung diese Pläne nur dann mit Aussicht auf Erfolg verfolgen konnte, wenn sie sich tatsächlich der Unterstützung einer breiten Mehrheit unter den angeseheneren Mönchen sicher sein konnte. Es hat sich gezeigt, dass dies der Fall gewesen ist.

Die 66 Mitglieder des ''Working Sangha Committee'' waren Mönche aus den vier grössten unter den neun Nikāyas (''Gruppen'') des Ordens, von denen nachher ausführlich die Rede sein wird, nämlich 58 Sayadaws des Sudhamma-Nikāya, 5 Sayadaws des Shwegyin-Nikāya, 2 Sayadaws des Mahādvāra-Nikāya und ein Sayadaw des Mūladvāra-Nikāya. Dieses Komitee trat am 1. Februar 1980 zu seiner ersten Sitzung zusammen und begann die Beratung der der Sangha-Konvention vorzulegenden Entwürfe. Am 5. April 1980 beschloss der Ausschuss, dass 1235 Delegierte an der Sangha-Konvention teilnehmen sollten, die sich folgendermassen zusammensetzen sollten: 38 in den zurückliegenden Jahren mit hohen geistlichen Titeln ausgezeichnete Mönche, nämlich Abhidhajamahāraṭṭhaguru Sayadaws (5),Sayadaws mit dem Gelehrtentitel eines Aggamahāpaṇḍita (30) und Mönche mit dem Titel Tipiṭakadharadhammabhaṇḍāgārika (3), ferner alle 66 Mitglieder des ''Working Sangha Committee'' sowie 1131 Vertreter der neun Nikāyas (''Gruppen'') im Orden, nämlich des Sudhamma-Nikāya (1006), des Shwegyin-Nikāya (77), des Mahādvāra-Nikāya (17), des Weluwun-Nikāya (12), des Mūladvāra-Nikāya (9), des Mahayin Gaing (3), des Ngettwin Gaing (3), des Kanawimoke Kado Gaing (3) und des Anaukchaung Dvāra-Nikāya (1). Die Verteilung der Vertreter auf die einzelnen Nikāyas sollte deren jeweiligem Anteil an der Zahl der Mönche Birmas insgesamt entsprechen. Diese wird in einigen Berichten als 109.032, in anderen aber als 123.450 angegeben. Die Zahl der Delegierten betrug jedenfalls 1.235. Bei der erst genannten Zahl von Mönchen wären daher von je hundert Mönchen eines Nikāya im Durchschnitt zehn Delegierte entsandt worden, was 1.090 Delegierte der Nikāyas ergibt, wozu noch die 145 unter anderen Gesichtspunkten ausgewählten Sayadaws kamen. Im zweiten Fall würde insgesamt auf je hundert Mön-

che ein Delegierter gekommen sein. Die Berichte bleiben in diesem
Punkte widersprüchlich.

Aufgabe der Sangha-Konvention war es nun, die vom Sangha
Working Committee ausgearbeiteten Vorlagen zu verabschieden
und damit eine vom Sangha insgesamt legitimierte Verfassung für
den Sangha zu schaffen. In dieser Weise soll die von U Nu früher
vergeblich versuchte grundlegende Reform des Sangha verwir-
klicht sowie darüber hinaus auch eine einheitliche Verwaltung für
die buddhistischen religiösen Institutionen geschaffen werden. Eine
solche einheitliche Verwaltung hatte zur Zeit der birmanischen
Könige existiert. Streng genommen wird man wohl eher sagen
müssen, dass die Birmanen der kolonialen und nachkolonialen Zeit
die Existenz einer solchen einheitlichen Organisationsstruktur in
die Zeit der Monarchie projizieren. Dies geschieht infolge der bei
den Buddhisten Birmas (wie Sri Lankas) heute überaus weit ver-
breiteten Tendenz, die vorkoloniale Vergangenheit zu glorifizieren
und sich vorzustellen, dass die heute bestehenden Probleme in
jener Zeit in idealer Weise gelöst gewesen seien. Tatsächlich lagen
die Verhältnisse wesentlich komplexer, wie z.B. auch Mendelson
dargelegt hat (vgl. Mendelson, *Sangha and State*, S. 57 f., 84 u.ö.).
In einem Bericht, den U Khin am 28.5.1980 im ''BBC Burmese
Service'' über die Sangha-Konvention abgab, heisst es dazu:

> Under the Burmese kings the Buddhist sanghas were subjected to some
> form of state control through a Minister of Religious Affairs, known as
> Mahadan Wun. He in turn had to consult the head of the Sangha order in
> meting(!) out punishment to wayward monks. The British Government in
> Burma, ever loath to mix religious with secular affairs did away with this
> system.

In Thailand sowie in Kambodscha bis zur Revolution von 1975
fanden die Birmanen zudem ein Modell dafür vor, wie eine funk-
tionierende zentrale Sangha-Organisation etwa aussehen konnte
(vgl. Bechert, *Buddhismus*, Bd. 2, S. 184-195 und 230-235). Die
Regierung Birmas hatte dabei in der angedeuteten Weise berück-
sichtigt, dass sie sich selbst als säkulare Regierung definiert und
jahrelang die Trennung von Staat und Sangha propagiert hatte —
in bewusstem Gegensatz zu der illusionistischen Religionspolitik
von U Nu. Andererseits war sich die Regierung Ne Win der Tatsa-
che wohl bewusst, dass sie nicht unerhebliche Sympathien bei der

Bevölkerungsmehrheit gewinnen konnte, wenn sie eine wirklich erfolgreiche Religionspolitik in die Wege leiten konnte. Für die meisten Birmanen ist ihre nationale Identität nach wie vor untrennbar mit ihrer buddhistischen Religiosität verknüpft. Eine Lösung des Problems der Reformbedürftigkeit des Sangha gehört daher zu den Anliegen, die grosse Teile der Bevölkerung von einer effektiven Regierung erwarten. So heisst es in dem schon zitierten Bericht von U Khin:

> Burmese Buddhists have long been aware that the respect and reverence which is given to monks can give rise to abuses and even provide immunity for criminal elements. They have not been happy with this state of affairs but assumed that there was little that could be done about it. No one would dream of questioning a monk as to his credentials.

Mit dem beschriebenen Verfahren hatte die Regierung die Reformaufgabe in dem Sinne in Angriff genommen, dass sie angesehene Mönche, von denen sie entsprechende Unterstützung erhoffte, mit der Vorbereitung der Konferenz betraute, einlud und damit den Rahmen für eine formal vom Sangha selbst durchzuführende Reorganisation absteckte, die nicht wieder wie 1965 in einem allgemeinen Dissens endete. Trotz der grundsätzlichen Trennung von Religion und Staat wurde die Reform des Sangha unter staatlicher Aufsicht durchgeführt. Dabei stand auch das schon von den birmanischen Königen angestrebte Ziel im Hintergrund, mit einer Stärkung der Mönchsdisziplin ein Abgleiten des Sangha in politische Verstrickungen zu verhindern, wie es Birma in den Jahrzehnten zwischen 1920 und 1940 sowie zwischen 1950 und 1962 erlebt hatte und wie es in Sri Lanka seit dem Ende der Kolonialzeit zu beobachten ist.

Die nach der geschilderten Vorbereitungsphase einberufene grosse Sangha-Konvention fand am 24. bis 27. Mai 1980 in der künstlichen Höhle in der Nähe der Kaba-Aye Pagode nördlich von Rangoon statt, die für die Sitzungen des Sechsten Buddhistischen Konzils (*Chaṭṭhasaṅgāyanā*) 1956 erbaut worden war. Von den als Teilnehmer an der Konvention ausgewählten 1.235 Mönchen waren 1.219 tatsächlich anwesend. Die Konvention beriet und verabschiedete die vom Sangha Working Committee vorgelegten Gesetze über eine einheitliche Organisationsstruktur für den gesamten Sangha des Landes und über die Schaffung einer arbeits-

fähigen geistlichen Gerichtsbarkeit. In Zunkunft werden nur noch solche Personen als *bhikkhu* (voll ordinierter buddhistischer Mönch) anerkannt, die sich dieser Autorität unterzuordnen bereit sind. Die neun Nikāyas, deren Vertreter an der Konvention teilnahmen, wurden offiziell anerkannt. In Zukunft ist die Bildung neuer Nikāyas verboten. Ausserdem ist eine Registrierung aller Mönche sowie ihre Ausstattung mit Ausweisen vorgesehen, deren Ausstellung in engem Zusammenwirken von geistlicher und staatlicher Verwaltung erfolgt.

Nach der neuen Ordensverfassung wird der Sangha Birmas von einem während der Konvention gewählten Arbeitskomitee mit 300 Mitgliedern geleitet, aus deren Mitte wiederum 33 Sanghanāyakas (''Sangha-Oberhäupter'') gewählt werden. Diese bilden die Sangha-Regierung mit den drei Verwaltungsbereichen ''Wissenschaft'', ''Gerichtsbarkeit'' und ''Verschiedenes''. Der Text der neuen Verfassung des Sangha wurde vom birmanischen Parlament am 25. Juni 1980 bestätigt und damit zum Gesetz erhoben. Von grösster Wichtigkeit ist schliesslich auch das Gesetz über die geistliche Gerichtsbarkeit, das ebenfalls von der Sangha-Konvention und danach vom birmanischen Parlament verabschiedet worden ist. Die Entscheidungen der geistlichen Gerichtsbarkeit sind nötigenfalls von den staatlichen Organen zu vollstrecken. Die offiziöse englische Übersetzung dieses Gesetzestexts ist als Anhang II beigefügt.

Im Mai 1982 wurde berichtet, dass bisher 4.316 Sanghanāyaka-Organisationen (also Leitungsgremien) auf lokaler Ebene gebildet sowie 5.773 Vinayadhara Sayadaws (geistliche Richter) für die Vinicchaya Courts (geistlichen Gerichtshöfe) gewählt worden seien. Bis dahin hatten sich 160.845 Mönche und Novizen registrieren lassen.

Die Reform erstreckt sich auch auf den Bereich der Nonnengemeinde. Nun gibt es nach übereinstimmender Tradition in allen Theravāda-Ländern seit 456 n.Chr. keine *bhikkhunī*, also keine durch *upasampadā* voll geweihte Nonne mehr. Die Meithila-shin (*may sīla rhaṅ*), die die geistliche Robe tragen und mindestens zehn Gelübde auf sich genommen haben, haben jedoch in der birmanischen Gesellschaft heute eine dem alten Nonnenorden entsprechende Stellung. Auch sie sind der Registrierungspflicht unterworfen. Anfang 1984 hatten von den 20.364 Nonnen in Birma

bereits 14.810 ihre Registrierungsurkunden erhalten. Als Folgeer-
scheinung des neuen religiösen Eifers lässt sich verstärktes Interesse
junger Frauen, gerade auch aus der städtischen Bildungsschicht,
am klösterlichen Leben beobachten.

Anlässlich der Sangha-Konferenz 1980 wurde von der Regie-
rung auch eine Generalamnestie erlassen, die vor allem auch den
politischen Häftlingen und den aus politischen Gründen ins Exil
gegangenen Gegnern der Regierung zugute gekommen ist. Der
prominenteste Rückkehrer war U Nu, der sich nun mit dem herr-
schenden Regime aussöhnte. Er wurde zum Präsidenten der
''Pitaka Translation Society'' gemacht, deren Aufgabe es sein soll,
die kanonischen buddhistischen Texte vollständig neu ins Englische
zu übersetzen und damit zugleich für die Verbreitung des Buddhis-
mus in aller Welt zu sorgen. Dabei ist vorgesehen, ''to use only the
Chaṭṭha Saṅgāyanā edition of Piṭaka either in Pali or Burmese lan-
guages [d.h. die vom Sechsten Buddhistischen Konzil 1954 bis
1956 redigierte Textfassung] as basis for translation; and in the
translations, to use simple and common terms understandable by
the people without sacrificing to the smallest degree the spirit of
Lord Buddha's sermons'' (so Bericht in ''Working People's
Daily'', Rangoon, 7.9.1980). Die bisher vorliegenden englischen
Übersetzungen, die vor allem von der ''Pali Text Society'' in Lon-
don publiziert worden sind, sind den Birmanen, wie man mir 1984
sagte, zu stark von westlichem Denken geprägt. Vor allem hat man
gegen sie einzuwenden, dass sie sich nicht immer an die von den
Kommentatoren überlieferte Interpretation der Texte halten, son-
dern zum Teil davon abweichende Auffassungen formulieren. Das
Übersetzungskomitee selbst besteht aus Laien, die jedoch ständig
mit einem Mönchskomitee zusammenarbeiten.

Mit seiner neuen Religionspolitik hat Präsident Ne Win sowohl
an die Tradition der Politik birmanischer Könige angeknüpft wie
sich auch in die Nachfolge der Religionspolitik der Ära U Nu ein-
geordnet, was die Vereinheitlichung der Sangha-Struktur und die
Durchsetzung der Mönchsdisziplin anbelangt. Darüber hinaus
wird der schon von König Mindon, dem Veranstalter des Fünften
Konzils, wie von U Nu als Patron des Sechsten Konzils erhobene
Anspruch der Birmanen auf eine führende Stellung innerhalb des
Weltbuddhismus erneuert, nachdem sich das Land fast zwanzig

Jahre lang gegenüber den Bestrebungen internationaler buddhistischer Kooperation weitgehend isoliert hatte. Wie erwähnt, wurde gleichwohl die Trennung von Sangha und Staat als formales Prinzip und theoretische Grundlage dieser Massnahmen aufrecht erhalten. Auch dies hat Tradition. Wenn man in den Pāli-Chroniken die Wendung *dhammakammena sodhesi* für eine Ordensreform liest, so ist darunter zu verstehen, dass Ordensversammlungen unter dem Patronat eines Herrschers Reformmassnahmen beschlossen haben, nicht etwa dass die Herrscher selbst solche Gesetze erlassen hätten. Übrigens nahm der Staatspräsident selbst, auf dessen Initiative die ganze Reform natürlich zurückgeht, nicht persönlich an den Sitzungen der Konferenz teil. Er beschränkte sich darauf, die Delegierten am Tage vor Konferenzbeginn aufzusuchen.

Im Zusammenhang mit der Vorgeschichte und der Auswahl der Delegierten der Konvention wurden die Nikāyas bereits erwähnt. Die mit dem Pāli-Wort *nikāya* (''Gruppe'') oder mit dem birmanischen Wort *guiṇh* (aus Pāli *gaṇa* herzuleiten) bezeichneten Gruppierungen des Sangha werden in der westlichen Literatur oft in irreführender Weise als ''buddhistische Sekten'' bezeichnet. Die Reorganisation des Sangha hat zu einer formalen Klärung der bestehenden Nikāya-Gliederung im birmanischen Sangha geführt, weil Grundsätze benötigt wurden, nach denen über die Anerkennung einer Mönchsweihe entschieden werden konnte. Damit wird uns nun ein genaueres Bild von diesen Gruppierungen vermittelt, als man es bisher gewinnen konnte. (Über die bisher zugänglichen Informationen siehe Bechert, ''The Structure of the Sangha in Burma: A Comparative View'', *Studies in History of Buddhism*, ed. A. K. Narain, Delhi 1980, S. 33-42, sowie das eingangs angeführte Werk von E. M. Mendelson). Während in einigen Berichten von zehn anerkannten Nikāyas die Rede war, sind endgültig nur neun Nikāyas anerkannt worden, d.h. jeder birmanische Mönch muss einem dieser neun Nikāyas angehören, um als rechtmässig ordinierter *bhikkhu* betrachtet werden zu können. Die Bildung neuer Nikāyas ist ausdrücklich verboten worden. Bestehende Nikāyas dürfen sich jedoch zusammenschliessen.

An dieser Stelle seien einige Bemerkungen über Natur und historischen Ursprung dieser Gliederung des Sangha eingefügt. Der buddhistische Orden kennt bekanntlich im Prinzip kein Ober-

haupt. Der Buddha hat es abgelehnt, einen Nachfolger zu benen-
nen und erklärte stattdessen seine Lehre zur alleinigen Leitlinie für
den Sangha nach seinem Tode. Daher war der frühe Sangha in
autonomen örtlichen Gemeinden organisiert. Diese Gemeinden
nehmen als *sangha* die vom buddhistischen Kirchenrecht vorge-
schriebenen Rechtshandlungen des Ordens (*dhammakamma, sangha-
kamma* oder *vinayakamma*) in Versammlungen vor, an denen inner-
halb einer bestimmten, durch Übereinkunft festgelegten "Grenze"
(*sīmā*) alle dort befindlichen Mönche vollzählig (*samagga*) teilzuneh-
men haben. Andernfalls ist die Rechtshandlung ungültig. Nun
wird schon im kanonischen Vinaya-Text von einem Schisma (*san-
ghabheda*, "Ordensspaltung") berichtet, das durch den abtrünnigen
Devadatta hervorgerufen wurde. Eine solche "Ordensspaltung"
ist, wie aus dem Text eindeutig hervorgeht, die Spaltung eines
bestimmten örtlichen Sangha in zwei oder mehrere Parteien, die
dann ihre Rechtshandlungen nicht mehr gemeinsam vornehmen,
obwohl sie zu demselben Residenzbereich (*āvāsa*) gehören. Solche
Ordensspaltungen wurden im allgemeinen durch Meinungsver-
schiedenheiten über die Anwendung der Regeln der Mönchsdiszi-
plin und des buddhistischen geistlichen Rechts hervorgerufen. Eine
"Ordensspaltung" (*sanghabheda*) zu verursachen gilt als schweres
Vergehen gegen die Ordenszucht.

Wenn nun aber unterschiedliche Auffassungen in verschiedenen
Sanghas vertreten werden, die innerhalf ihrer eigenen Grenzen
(*sīmā*) einhellige Beschlüsse fassen, so liegt keine "Ordensspal-
tung" (*sanghabheda*) vor, sondern *nikāyabheda*, die Bildung unter-
schiedlicher "Gruppen" von Mönchen, für die der schon erwähnte
Terminus *nikāya* benützt wird. (Genaueres siehe Bechert, "Einlei-
tung", in: *Zur Schulzugehörigkeit von Werken der Hīnayāna-Literatur*,
Teil 1, Göttingen 1985, S. 26-44). Dieser Sachverhalt entspricht
der von Mendelson (*Sangha and State*, S. 103) zitierten Äusserung
von Mönchen der "Weluwun Sect", nämlich "that sects grew up
only for disciplinary purposes and without any aim of splitting the
Sangha" — eine Aussage, die Mendelson rätselhaft geblieben ist.

Wesentlich ist nun, dass Mönche verschiedener Nikāyas im all-
gemeinen nicht gemeinsam Rechtshandlungen des Ordens (*vinaya-
kamma*) vornehmen. Sie sprechen sich gegenseitig die Gültigkeit
ihrer Mönchsweihe (*upasampadā*) zwar nicht prinzipiell ab, erken-

nen sie aber auch nicht als zweifelsfrei an. Bestehen aber Zweifel
an der Gültigkeit der Mönchsweihe der teilnehmenden Mönche, so
wird wiederum die Gültigkeit der von ihnen durchgeführten
Rechtshandlungen zweifelhaft. Die Vornahme von Mönchsordina-
tionen hat als wichtigste Rechtshandlung dieser Art zu gelten. Wird
deren Gültigkeit zweifelhaft, so ist damit die Legitimation des
Sangha überhaupt gefährdet.

Aus diesen Gründen haben die Mönche in Theravāda-Ländern,
ganz besonders in Birma und in Sri Lanka, grössten Wert auf die
genaue Überprüfung aller Voraussetzungen für den Vollzug von
Mönchsweihen gelegt. Dazu gehört nicht nur die Zugehörigkeit
aller teilnehmenden Mönche zu demselben Nikāya, sondern auch
die Gewissheit, dass die Gültigkeit der Festlegung der Gemeinde-
grenze (*sīmā*) über jeden Zweifel erhaben ist. Streitigkeiten über
sīmā-Fragen haben sowohl im birmanischen wie im ceylonesischen
Sangha wiederholt zu neuen Nikāya-Spaltungen geführt.

Dass in verschiedenen Nikāyas unterschiedliche dogmatische
Auffassungen vertreten werden, ist eher die Ausnahme als die
Regel. Nun schreiben die frühen und mittelalterlichen Handbücher
über die Gruppierungen des frühen Buddhismus den damaligen
Nikāyas, z.B. den *Sthaviravādin* (*Theravādin*), *Sarvāstivādin*, *Dharma-
gupta*, *Mahāsāṅghika* usw. unterschiedliche Lehrauffassungen zu,
und solche Gruppen werden auch als Träger unterschiedlicher
Meinungen (*vāda*) charakterisiert. Die heute bestehenden Nikāyas
sind demgegenüber jedoch sämtlich ''Gruppierungen'' innerhalb
des Theravāda, also innerhalb einer und derselben dogmatischen
Richtung, und sie alle stützen sich auf ein und dasselbe Corpus hei-
liger Schriften. Dies schliesst nicht aus, dass kleinere Unterschiede
in der Auslegung dieser Texte zu etwas abweichenden Regelungen
nicht nur für die Mönchsdisziplin (Art des Tragens der Mönchsro-
ben, Abrasieren oder Belassen der Augenbrauen, Frage des Rauch-
verbotes, Tragen von Sandalen, Einzelheiten von Regelungen für
den Almosengang u.ä.) geführt, sondern auch die Kultpraxis
(abweichende Einleitungsformeln zur traditionellen Pūjā, unter-
schiedliche Regelungen für die Teilnahme von Mönchen an
bestimmten Kulthandlungen u.ä.) beeinflusst haben. Alle Nikāyas
innerhalb des Theravāda können als ''Vinaya-Schulen'' bezeichnet
werden, weil die Differenzierung im wesentlichen auf unterschied-

lichen Auffassungen hinsichtlich der Gültigkeit von Rechtshandlungen des Sangha (*vinayakamma*) beruht.

Es gibt auch Fälle, in denen gar keine grundsätzliche Meinungsverschiedenheit besteht, sondern eine Grupe sich einfach örtlich so
weit von anderen Angehörigen desselben Nikāya entfernt hat, dass
die gegenseitige Überprüfung der Korrektheit des Vollzugs der
Rechtshandlungen nicht mehr sichergestellt ist. In einem solchen
Fall kann durch Übereinkunft eine Entlassung aus dem Verband
einer Gruppierung (sog. *gaṇavimutti* oder *gaṇavimokkha*, ''Befreiung
aus der Gruppe'') vollzogen werden. Offenbar diente dieses Verfahren auch der Lösung von Konflikten in der hierarchischen
Struktur des Sangha.

Dies hat seinen Grund darin, dass sich die kollegiale Struktur des
Sangha nicht auf die Dauer erhalten konnte. Vor allem in Ländern, in denen der Sangha in eine gewisse Abhängigkeit vom Staat
geriet, bestand die Tendenz, eine Hierarchie aufzubauen, durch
die eine Kontrolle über die Einzelklöster ausgeübt werden konnte.
In Birma war diese Hierarchie, wie erwähnt, in der vorkolonialen
Zeit verhältnismässig weit ausgebaut, doch verlor sie nach der Eingliederung des Landes in das britisch-indische Empire weitgehend
ihren tatsächlichen Einfluss. Vor allem in der Mehrheitsgruppe des
Sangha, die den von der Bezeichnung für die höchsten Amtsträger
der alten Hierarchie (*Sudhamma charā-tō*, ''Thudamma Sayadaw'')
abgeleiteten Namen *Sudhammanikāya* führt, wurden zwar nicht alle
einzelnen Klöster, sehr wohl aber die einzelnen Klostergruppen
wieder weitgehend autonom. Demgegenüber haben die kleineren
im 19. Jahrhundert begründeten Nikāyas eigene hierarchische
Strukturen aufgebaut, durch die sie ihren Zusammenhalt und ihre
Identität bewahren konnten. Sie verwendeten für ihre Oberhäupter
die zuerst im spätmittelalterlichen Ceylon nachweisbare Bezeichnung *mahānāyakathera*.

An dieser Stelle sei noch daran erinnert, dass die Lehrersukzessionen nicht immer mit den Ordinationstraditionen übereinstimmen müssen. Zunächst einmal hat jeder Mönch einen ''Meister''
(*upajjhāya*) und einen ''Lehrer'' (*ācariya*). Vor allem in Gebieten
und in Zeiten, in denen bei den Mönchen grössere Mobilität zu
beobachten ist und sie nicht fest an ein einzelnes Kloster gebunden
waren, konnte ein Mönch auch in unterschiedlichen Gemeinden

die *pabbajjā* (die erste, "niedere" Ordination) und die *upasampadā* (volle Mönchsweihe) erhalten und damit unterschiedlichen Lehrer-sukzessionen angehören. Die von Mendelson (*Sangha and State*, S. 42 ff. u.ö. sowie Appendix D) erwähnten "monastischen Linien" stellen daher in vielen Fällen nur jeweils einen unter mehreren gegebenen Zusammenhängen dar. Schlussfolgerungen daraus sind daher nur in begrenztem Umfang möglich.

Die neun Nikāyas des birmanischen Sangha

Bei den neun Nikāyas des heutigen birmanischen Sangha handelt es sich durchweg um "Vinaya-Schulen". Sie seien hier in Anlehnung an die von Dhammaghosaka Ūḥ Moṅ Moṅ verfasste Abhandlung "*Saṃghā guiṇḥ krīḥ 9 guiṇḥ akroṅḥ*" (Rankun 1981) kurz vorgestellt. (Den Bezeichnungen für die Nikāyas in der exakten Terminologie sind jeweils die konventionellen anglisierten Schrei-bungen beigefügt, wie sie z.B. E. M. Mendelson, *Sangha and State*, und mit kleineren Abweichungen E. Sarkisyanz, "Die Religionen Kambodschas, Birmas, Laos, Thailands und Malayas", *Die Reli-gionen Südostasiens*, Stuttgart 1975, S. 421-482 verwendet).

1. *Sudhamma guiṇḥ* oder *Sudhammanikāya*; ("Thudhamma Sect"; in älteren Quellen auch als "Kan Gaing" und als "Mahagandi" bezeichnet). Dieser Nikāya entstand 1214 B.E. (birmanische Ära; 1852 n.Chr.), als König Mindon die Gliederung des bis dahin ein-heitlichen Sangha Birmas in zwei Nikāyas veranlasste, indem er den Sudhamma Sayadaws, also den Hierarchen des damaligen Sangha, die Erteilung von *gaṇavimutti* (siehe oben) für den *Rvhe kyaṅ nikāya* nahelegte (erwähnt auch bei Mendelson, *Sangha and State*, S. 97). Der *Sudhammanikāya* ist nichts anderes als die Mehrheits-gruppe, die weiterhin unter der Jurisdiktion der traditionellen Hierarchie der Sudhamma Sayadaws verblieb. Er erhielt jedoch später, wie erwähnt, durch den Verfall des Einflusses der traditio-nellen Hierarchie eine "lose Struktur", d.h. die einzelnen Kloster-komplexe wurden weitgehend autonom. Jedoch haben sich inner-halb des *Sudhammanikāya* bestimmte Gruppierungen herausgebildet, unter denen die sog. "Pakkoku-Sekte" (*Pakhukkū guiṇḥ*) die wohl bekannteste darstellt. Es handelt sich bei dieser Gruppierung nicht um einen Nikāya, sondern um einen Verband

von Klöstern, die vor allem auf dem Gebiet der geistlichen Bildung
eng kooperieren, sich aber als dem *Sudhammanikāya* angehörig
betrachten (vgl. Mendelson, *Sangha and State*, S. 111; zur
Geschichte dieser Gruppe siehe Kelāsa, *Pakhukkū sāsanā vaṅ*, Ran-
kun 1967).

　2. *Rvhe kyaṅ nikāya guiṇh* (''Shwegyin Nikāya'' oder ''Shwegyin
Sect''). Dieser zur Zeit des Königs Mindon, wie erwähnt, durch
Abspaltung von der Mehrheitsgruppe entstandene Nikāya propa-
gierte eine strengere Handhabung der Mönchszucht. Es ist die älte-
ste der heute noch existierenden ''Reformsekten'' Birmas. Diese
Richtung ist die in der bisherigen Literatur am ausführlichsten
behandelte Gruppierung im Sangha Birmas (vgl. auch Mendelson,
Sangha and State, S. 96-102). Über ihre Geschichte ist eine offiziöse
Darstellung in birmanischer Sprache publiziert worden: Rvhe
haṃsā charā-tō arhaṅ Paṇḍita ther (Paṇḍitasirī), *Rvhe kyaṅ nikāya
sāsanā vaṅ*, Rankun (Rangoon): Buddha Sāsana Council 1963. In
sehr begrenzter Auflage erschien als hektographierter Privatdruck
im Jahre 1980 in Rangoon das Buch *History of Shwegyin Nikāya
(Shwegyin Sect in the Order of Buddhist Monks) in Burma* von Than Tun.

　Aus der Tatsache, dass der Shwegyin Sayadaw vom damaligen
Oberhaupt des Ordens in aller Form *gaṇavimutti* erhielt, erklärt sich
auch die von Mendelson (*Sangha and State*, S. 98) nicht verstandene
Feststellung von Maung Htin Aung, wonach ''the ecclesiastical
[Thudhamma] council did not consider the Shwegyin Sayadaw to
be a rebel against their authority'' (Maung Htin Aung, *Burmese
Monk's Tales*, New York 1966, S. 25).

　3. *Mahādvāra nikāya guiṇh* oder *Dhammānudhammamahādvāranikāya*
(Mahādvāranikāya oder ''Dwaya Sect''). Begründer dieser Rich-
tung war der *'Ug phuir charā-tō* (Okpo Sayadaw, 1179-1267 B.E.,
d.h. 1817-1905 n.Chr.). Die Gründung dieses Nikāya als selbstän-
dige Gruppe war Folge eines Disputs in Okpo im Jahre 1217 B.E.
(1855 n.Chr.). Mendelson bespricht auch die Geschichte dieses
Nikāya verhältnismässig ausführlich (*Sangha and State*, S. 92-96).

　Die in älteren Quellen vorkommende Benennung Culagandi
wurde gelegentlich als Sammelbezeichnung für alle kleineren
Nikāyas verwendet. Einen Cūlagaṇṭhi-Nikāya (''Sulagandi-
Nikāya'') hat es nie gegeben; meine frühere Darstellung (*Buddhis-
mus*, Bd. 2, S. 23) ist in diesem Sinne zu verbessern. Irrtümlich

sind die von Mendelson (*Sangha and State*, S. 92 mit Anm. 55) und
Sarkisyanz (*Die Religionen Südostasiens*, S. 464) formulierten Vermu-
tungen eines Zusammenhangs dieser Gruppen mit der *Ekaṃsika*-
Partei im *Pārupana*-Streit. Diese hatte sich auf den Pāli-Text *Cūla-
gaṇṭhipada* berufen, aber dieser Textname hat nichts mit der späte-
ren Gruppenbezeichnung zu tun. Der *Pārupana*-Streit war im 17.
und 18. Jahrhundert zwischen den Mönchen, die ausserhalb des
Klosters beide Schultern mit ihrer Robe bedecken (*ubhayaṃsika*),
und denen, die nur eine Schulter bedecken (*ekaṃsika*), geführt wor-
den (siehe Niharranjan Ray, *An Introduction into the Study of Thera-
vāda Buddhism in Burma*, Calcutta 1946, S. 217-236). In Birma sind
nach der endgültigen Entscheidung der Streitfrage unter König
Bodawpaya keine Anhänger der *ekaṃsika*-Praxis mehr nachzuwei-
sen. Die entsprechenden Spekulationen Mendelsons sind daher
gegenstandslos. Die Bezeichnung ''Sulagandi'' weist lediglich auf
die kleinere Zahl der Anhänger dieser Richtungen. Die Regelung,
dass ''Dwaya monks are not allowed to associate with monks other
than those listed by the maha nayaka, or the leader of the sect''
(Mendelson, *Sangha and State*, S. 96), bezieht sich nur auf die
gemeinsame Vornahme von Rechtshandlungen des Sangha (*vinaya-
kamma*), weist jedoch darauf hin, dass schon von Anfang an eine
zentrale Registrierung aller Mönche dieses Nikāya stattgefunden
hat. Die Bezeichnung *Dvāranikāya* ist von dem Gebrauch des Wor-
tes *dvāra* anstelle des Wortes *kamma* in der Einleitung einer wichti-
gen Rezitationsformel hergeleitet; ihr liegt eine philosophisch stren-
gere Auffassung des Karma-Gesetzes zugrunde.

    4. *Mūladvāra-nikāya guiṇḥ* oder *Dhammavinayānulomamūladvārani-
kāya* (''Ingapu Dwaya Sect''). Nach dem Tode des Okpo Sayadaw
bildete der *Aṅgapū charā-tō* (Ingapu Sayadaw) den Mūladvārani-
kāya, der sich von der Mehrheitsgruppe im *Dvāranikāya* abspaltete
(vgl. Mendelson, *Sangha and State*, S. 95 f.) und für sich in Anspruch
nahm, die ursprüngliche Tradition dieses Nikāya zu repräsen-
tieren.

    5. *Anok khyoṅḥ dvāra nikāya*, ursprünglich *Anok khyoṅḥ khrok pāḥ
guiṇḥ* (''der Anok khyoṅḥ-[Bezeichnung des westlichen Irrawaddy-
Deltagebietes]Nikāya der sechs Führer'', ''Anaukchaung-Dvāra-
Nikāya''). Dieser Nikāya entstand, noch zu Lebzeiten des Okpo
Sayadaw, als sechs Sayadaws im Deltagebiet eine Entscheidung des

Okpo Sayadaw in einer ordensrechtlichen Streitfrage nicht akzep-
tierten. Die Gruppe wird bei Mendelson nicht erwähnt. Ihr sollen
etwa 800 Mönche angehören.

6. *Veḷuvan nikāya guiṇh* oder *Veḷuvananikāya* ("Weluwun Sect";
vgl. Mendelson, *Sangha and State*, S. 103-105). Dieser Nikāya wurde
vom *Veḷuvan charā-tō Ūh Pandavaṃsa* (Weluwun Sayadaw U Punta-
wuntha) im Jahre 1268 B.E. (1906 n.Chr.) gegründet; seine Orga-
nisation mit eigener *Sanghasabhā* (Ordenskonferenz) und einem
eigenständigen klösterlichen Prüfungssystem wird auf 1281 B.E.
(1919 n.Chr.) datiert.

7. *Catubhummika mahāsatipaṭṭhān Ṅhak tvaṅh guiṇh* ("Ngettwin
Sect" oder "Hngeʻ-twin-Nikāya"), gegründet vom *Rvhe maṅh vaṃ
charā-tō Ūh Paṇḍava*. Dieser Mönch wurde später unter dem Namen
Ṅhak tvaṅh charā-tō (Ngettwin Sayadaw) berühmt. Er lebte von 1193
bis 1272 B.E. (1831-1910 n.Chr.). Zunächst hielt er sich auf dem
Klosterhügel von Sagaing auf und predigte auch vor König Min-
don, von dem er einen Ehrentitel verliehen bekam. Er geriet in
Gegensatz zum Rat des *Sudhammanikāya*, weil er Reformideen ver-
trat, die den Sudhamma Sayadaws zu weit gingen. Dazu gehört
insbesondere die Ablehnung der Praxis, Opfergaben vor Buddha-
Statuen und auf Altären niederzulegen, sowie die obligatorische
Ausbildung aller Mönche in Meditationsübungen als Vorausset-
zung für die Zulassung zur Ordination. Der Ngettwin Sayadaw gilt
als einer der ersten Mönche, die in jüngerer Vergangenheit für die
Wiederbelebung der lange in Vergessenheit geratenen Praxis der
Satipaṭṭhāna-Meditation in Birma sorgten. Seit etwa 1885 verbreite-
ten sich seine Lehren vor allem in Niederbirma. Die von Mendel-
son ausführlich diskutierte Möglichkiet eines Zusammenhangs mit
der Paramat-Bewegung (Mendelson, *Sangha and State*, S. 105 und
108; vgl. auch unten) ist nur phantasievolle Spekulation. Die vom
Ngettwin Sayadaw geforderten Reformen bleiben völlig innerhalb
des Rahmens der Orthodoxie und können als frühe Vorläufer
modernistischer Bestrebungen verstanden werden. Dies gilt insbe-
sondere für die Ablehnung von Opfergaben vor Altären und Sta-
tuen sowie für die starke Betonung der Meditation. Über die
Geschichte dieser Schule ist eine birmanische Abhandlung erschie-
nen (Ūh Lha Puiṅ, *Catubhummikamaggaṅ sāsanā-vaṅ samuiṅh*; liegt
mir nicht vor).

8. *Gaṇavimut Kūḥ tui guiṇḥ* oder *Gaṇavimuttika-nikāya kūḥ tui guiṇḥ*
("Kanawimoke Kado Gaing"). Diese Gruppe wurde von *Piṭakat
tuik kyoṅḥ charā-tō Ūḥ Indavaṃsa* (1193-1279 B.E./1831-1917 n.Chr.)
begründet. Dieser Sayadaw erhielt 1258 B.E. (1896 n.Chr.) vom
damals amtierenden Oberhaupt des *Sudhammanikāya*, dem *Pukhaṇḥ
sāsanā-puiṅ* (Pahkan Thathanabaing; vgl. Mendelson, *Sangha and
State*, S. 115) auf seinen Antrag hin für sich und seine Anhänger
gaṇavimutti. Weitere Einzelheiten sind nicht bekannt. Anhänger
dieses Nikāya leben in Tenasserim im Süden Birmas.

9. *Dhammayuttika nikāya Mahāraṅ guiṇḥ* ("Mahayin Gaing"). Der
Gründer des Nikāya, *Nūnāmaññ Ūḥ Mahāraṅ* (Mahayin), trug den
Mönchsnamen *Ūḥ Buddhavaṃsa*. Er wurde 1203 B.E. (1841 n.Chr.)
in einem Mon-Dorf in Thailand geboren und in dem von dem spä-
teren König Mongkut begründeten *Dhammayuttikanikāya* ordiniert.
Er studierte in Bangkok und erhielt dort den Titel eines *Mahā* (ein
Grad der Pāli-Gelehrsamkeit). Im Jahre 1236 (1874 n.Chr.)
gelangte er in ein Dorf bei Moulmein in Birma und gründete dort
im nächsten Jahr das Kloster *Mahāraṅ kyoṅḥ tuik*, offenbar in der
Absicht, die thailändische Reformbewegung *Dhammayuttikanikāya*
(Thamayut Nikay) auch in Birma, vor allem bei der dortigen Mon-
Bevölkerung, zu verbreiten. Noch heute zählt diese Schule eine
grössere Zahl von Anhängern unter der Mon-Bevölkerung in den
zentralen und südlichen Landesteilen.

Die genannten neun Nikāyas sind sämtlich orthodox, d.h. sie
erkennen die Verbindlichkeit der textlichen Überlieferung des
Theravāda-Buddhismus an. Diese umfasst ausser den Texten des
Tipiṭaka auch die Serie der klassischen Kommentare (*aṭṭhakathā*)
sowie die Subkommentare (*ṭīkā*). Für alle diese Texte gelten die
nach dem vom Sechsten Konzil verabschiedeten Text publizierten
Ausgaben als verbindlich. Damit ist ein Mass an dogmatischer
Rigorosität festgeschrieben, das der buddhistischen Tradition sonst
fremd ist.

Die Nikāya-Unterschiede betreffen, wie gesagt, im wesentlichen
nur den Bereich des Vinaya. Während daher Mönche verschiede-
ner Observanz nicht gemeinsam an einer Ordinationszeremonie
teilnehmen können, sind einer Kooperation über die Nikāya-
Grenzen hinweg sonst kaum Grenzen gesetzt. Man trifft Mönche
verschiedener Nikāyas oft bei der gemeinsamen Rezitation des

Paritta und bei anderen Festlichkeiten sowie bei sonstigen Anläs-
sen, die nicht zu dem engen Kreis der vorgeschriebenen Vinaya-
kammas gehören. Soweit in Birma die Bildung von privaten Ver-
einen erlaubt ist, sind oft auch Angehörige verschiedener Nikāyas
in Mönchsvereinen gemeinsam tätig, die zur Vertretung ihrer
Interessen im allgemeinen oder zur Durchsetzung bestimmter Ziele
gebildet wurden (vgl. Bechert, *Buddhismus*, Bd. 2, S. 89-95). Das-
selbe gilt für entsprechende Mönchsvereine in Sri Lanka, die sich
nicht selten als *trinikāyika*, d.h. als Angehörige aller drei Haupt-
Nikāyas umfassend bezeichnen. Da die Mönchsvereinigungen
Ziele verfolgten, die auf einer ganz anderen Ebene lagen als die
Streitpunkte der traditionellen Nikāyas, hat es einen unmittelbaren
Zusammenhang von Mönchsvereinen und Nikāyas kaum je gege-
ben. Auch die von Sarkisyanz formulierte Annahme einer Ver-
flechtung des Obersten Sangha-Rates mit dem *Sudhammanikāya* zur
Zeit des Sechsten Konzils (Sarkisyanz, *Die Religionen Südostasiens*, S.
478 f.) beruht auf einem grundlegenden Missverständnis. Im Prin-
zip war wohl beabsichtigt, alle grossen Nikāyas ihrer Bedeutung
nach zu berücksichtigen. Mit sieben Vertretern von insgesamt nur
26 war aber gerade der Shwegyin-Nikāya stark überrepräsentiert
und der Sudhammanikāya benachteiligt.

Die Laien nehmen im allgemeinen von den Nikāya-
Unterschieden wenig Notiz. Eine Ausnahme von dieser Regel bil-
den die Anhänger des Ngettwin-Nikāya, weil sich seine abweichen-
den Kultregeln auch auf die rituelle Praxis der Laien auswirken.

Die Auseinandersetzung mit heterodoxen Ansichten (vāda)

Während die neun Nikāyas als orthodox anzusehen sind, hat es
in der Geschichte des birmanischen Buddhismus auch Traditionen
gegeben, deren Lehren sich grundsätzlich von der etablierten
Theravāda-Tradition unterscheiden. Dazu gehörten im Mittelalter
die Anhänger einer tantrischen Form des Buddhismus, die in den
Quellen als ''Ari'' (*araññ*) bezeichnet werden. Ihre Identifikation
ist nicht unumstritten (vgl. auch Mendelson, *Sangha and State*, S. 47)
und man wird der Frage, wieweit es neben den heterodoxen Tradi-
tionen anderen Ursprungs, die aus der Zeit vor der Einführung des
Theravāda noch weiterlebten, auch tantrische Strömungen inner-

halb des Theravāda gab, noch weiter nachgehen müssen. Sicher ist jedoch, dass es nach dem frühen 15. Jahrhundert keine Gruppen dieser Art mehr gab, die den Anspruch erheben konnten, als ordinierte Mönche zu gelten. Als König Dhammaceti 1479/1480 seine grosse Ordensreform durchführte, mussten — wie früher unter Parākramabāhu I. (1153-1186) in Ceylon — alle birmanischen Mönche sich in der Tradition des Kalyāṇivaṃsa neu ordinieren lassen, die aus Ceylon eingeführt wurde und nach dem Kalyāṇi-Fluss (heute Kälaṇi-ganga nördlich von Colombo) benannt ist.

Eine ''heterodoxe'' Bewegung sind nach allem, was wir wissen, die ''Paramats'' gewesen. Von diesen ist in Berichten ausländischer Berichterstatter aus der zweiten Hälfte des 19. und vom Anfang unseres Jahrhunderts die Rede. Ausser den von Mendelson erwähnten Berichten (Mendelson, *Sangha and State*, S. 73-77) ist der Reisebericht von Adolf Bastian aufschlussreich, der sogar einen Zusammenhang mit christlichen Einflüssen vermutete (vgl. auch E. Sarkisyanz, ''Fragen zum Problem des chronologischen Verhältnisses des buddhistischen Modernismus in Ceylon und Birma'', *Buddhism in Ceylon and Studies on Religious Syncretism in Buddhist Countries*, ed. H. Bechert, Göttingen 1978, S. 127; siehe ferner ders., *Die Religionen Südostasiens*, S. 461). Die Bezeichnung ''Paramat'' geht jedenfalls auf das Pāli-Wort *paramattha* zurück. Damit wird bekanntlich von den Buddhisten die Wahrheit ''im höchsten Sinne'' (*paramatthasacca*) von der konventionellen Wahrheit (*sammutisacca*) unterschieden. Der Buddha äusserte sich, den jeweiligen Hörern und der Art seiner Aussage entsprechend, entweder im konventionellen Sinne oder im Sinne der höchsten Wahrheit. Da mithin *paramattha* an sich eine durchaus orthodoxe Betrachtungsweise beinhaltet, muss man annehmen, dass die Anhänger dieser Richtung unter Berufung auf die doppelte Ausdrucksweise des Buddha bestimmte Aussagen ''im Sinne der höchsten Wahrheit'' interpretierten, die von den orthodoxen Theravādin nicht so aufgefasst worden sind. Vergleichbare Entwicklungen sind bekanntlich auch im Mahāyāna-Buddhismus einer sehr viel früheren Periode zu beobachten. Ich möchte anhand der allerdings ziemlich widersprüchlichen Berichte die Vermutung wagen, dass die ''Paramats'' Thesen vertreten haben, die wenigstens entfernte Verwandtschaft mit Lehren des Yogācāra-Buddhismus aufweisen (so die von eini-

gen Berichterstattern erwähnte Vorstellung von einem präexisten-
ten transzendentalen kosmischen Intellekt). Ein historischer
Zusammenhang ist kaum vorstellbar; doch sind Parallelentwick-
lungen aufgrund einer von der orthodoxen Kommentartradition
abweichenden Interpretation kanonischer Texte denkbar. Die
Unterdrückung dieser Richtung ist offenbar so radikal und erfolg-
reich gewesen, dass man heute keine genaue Vorstellung von ihren
Lehren mehr gewinnen kann.

Nicht mit Sicherheit einzuordnen ist die Sekte der ''Zawti'' (*joti*),
von der Mendelson (*Sangha and State*, S. 231-234) berichtet. Es han-
delt sich um eine nur unter der Schan-Bevölkerung verbreitete
kleine Gruppe mit nicht mehr als 30 bis 40 Mönchen. In den von
Mendelson zitierten Tagebuchaufzeichnungen kann ich nichts fin-
den, was auf einen wirklich heterodoxen Charakter dieser Gruppe
schliessen lässt. Ob ein Zusammenhang mit der in älteren Quellen
erwähnten ''Zodi-Sekte'' besteht (vgl. z.B. E. Sarkisyanz, *Die Reli-
gionen Südostasiens*, S. 460 und 461), bleibt unklar, solange sich die
Quellenlage nicht verbessert.

Während der Kolonialzeit und danach war es allein Sache des
Sangha, gegen Irrlehren vorzugehen. Grosse Mönchsversammlun-
gen haben wiederholt bestimmte Mönche als aus dem Orden aus-
geschlossen erklärt, meist jedoch, ohne diese Entscheidungen prak-
tisch durchsetzen zu können (Beispiele bei Bechert, *Buddhismus*, Bd.
2, S. 45 f.).

Mit der Ordensreform 1980 hat sich die Situation drastisch ver-
ändert. Nun erhielten die aufgrund des in Anhang II abgedruckten
Gesetzes über die geistliche Gerichtsbarkeit eingesetzten ''special
courts'' auch die Aufgabe ''eradicating bogus monks''. Dies
bedeutet, dass sie zu prüfen hatten, ob die von bestimmten Mön-
chen und Mönchsgruppen vertretenen Lehransichten (*vāda*) mit
den Pāli-Texten und ihrer in der Aṭṭhakathā- und Ṭīkā-Literatur
festgelegten Interpretation in Übereinstimmung stehen oder nicht.
Sofern es sich nach diesen Kriterien um ''Irrlehren'' handelt, wur-
den sie durch entsprechende Urteile verboten. Die Mönche muss-
ten sich entweder in aller Form von diesen ''Irrlehren'' lossagen
oder aber den Sangha verlassen. Diese als *adhammavāda* erklärten
Lehren dürfen auch nicht mehr verbreitet werden, ja der blosse
Besitz solcher Bücher ist verboten.

In den Jahren 1981 bis 1984 wurden nach den in ''The Light of the Dhamma'' (New Ser., Bd. 1-4) veröffentlichten Berichten mindestens zehn derartige Prozesse geführt. Die dazu veröffentlichen Angaben sind einstweilen noch spärlich, lassen aber in Verbindung mit dem, was man über früher erschienene Publikationen der betroffenen Mönche weiss, den Schluss zu, dass sich diese Prozesse in erster Linie gegen Vertreter radikal modernistischer Thesen wandten. Darunter fallen auch die Lehren von Mönchen mit marxistischen und sonstigen materialistischen Tendenzen. So wurden der ''Lu-thay Lu-phyit U Okkahta Vāda'' (vgl. auch Bechert, *Buddhismus*, Bd. 2, S. 159 f.), der ''Sammādiṭṭhi Sutesana Vāda'' und der ''Shwe Abhidhammā Vāda'' am 13. Mai 1981 feierlich als *adhamma* erklärt. Das 650 Seiten lange Urteil wurde am 24. bis 29. Oktober 1981 vom zuständigen Vinayadhara-Gerichtshof verlesen (vgl. *The Light of the Dhamma*, Bd. 1, 1981, Heft 3, S. 63). Die Angeklagten sagten sich von ihren Irrlehren los. In dem Bericht darüber heisst es, dass ihnen vorgeworfen und nachgewiesen worden sei, sie ''rejected the belief in kamma and the results of kamma, rejected the 31 abodes of existence preached by the Buddha, slandered the Buddha's Omniscience, did not accept the fact of freedom from Saṃsāra and rejected Samatha and Vipassanā practices, branded the Vinaya Rules as superstitious and ignored them, abused the Sangha, compared Buddha's hair with the horse's tail, compared the monk's robe with women's longyi, and rejected good practices such as reciting parittas, keeping uposatha, performing meritorious deeds'' und ähnliches. Diese Ansichten seien ''materialistic and against the teaching of the Pāli Canonical Texts''.

In einer regierungsamtlichen Verlautbarung von Anfang 1984 werden die bis dahin zu *adhammavāda* erklärten zehn Irrlehren aufgezählt: ''1. Kyaukthinbaw vāda, 2. Shin Okkahta's Luthay Luphyit vāda, Sammādiṭṭhi Sutesana vāda und Shwe Abhidhamma vāda, 3. Nyānasargī vāda, 4. Kyaung Pan Tawya vāda, 5. Kyaukpon Tawya vāda, 6. Sule U Myint Thein's vāda, 7. U Myat Thein Tun's vāda, 8. Shin Mālāvara (Yetarshe) vāda, 9. Dhammanīti vāda, and 10. Moe Nyo (North Okkalapa) vāda'' (nach *The Light of the Dhamma*, Bd. 4, Heft 1, S. 52).

Auf diese Weise wurde die Allgemeinverbindlichkeit der orthodoxen Lehre der Theravādin für den gesamten Sangha wiederher-

gestellt. Dies geschah auf Kosten der Freiheit der Diskussion über
Lehrinhalte unter den Mitgliedern des Sangha. Parallel dazu wur-
den zahlreiche Mönche durch neu gebildete regionale ''Sangha
Vinicchaya Courts'' aus dem Orden ausgeschlossen, weil sie gegen
grundlegende Vinaya-Regeln verstossen hatten. Dies betraf insbe-
sondere Mönche, die den Zölibat übertreten und mehr oder weni-
ger ständig mit Frauen zusammengelebt hatten. Diese Massnah-
men haben erhebliche Auswirkungen auf den birmanischen
Buddhismus, weil unter den betroffenen Mönchen mehrere
berühmte charismatische Mönche waren, denen ihre Anhänger
übernatürliche Fähigkeiten zugeschrieben hatten. Solche Mönche
hatten im Zentrum von Kultgemeinschaften des mystischen Volks-
buddhismus gestanden. Mendelson hat für diese Art buddhistischer
Kulte den Terminus ''messianic Buddhism'' geprägt (siehe E. M.
Mendelson, ''A Messianic Buddhist Association in Upper
Burma'', *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 24, 1961,
S. 560-580; vgl. Bechert, *Buddhismus*, Bd. 2, S. 50). Solche Kultge-
meinschaften, für die man auch der uns in anderem Sinne schon
geläufigen Bezeichnung ''gaing'' (*guiṇh*, eig. ''Schar'', ''Gruppe'')
begegnet, waren den orthodoxen Mönchen ebenso wie der Regie-
rung schon immer suspekt, nicht zuletzt wegen der politischen
Aspirationen mancher derartiger Gruppen. Zu den prominentesten
unter den betroffenen Mönchen gehören U Paramavaṇṇasiddhi,
der in einem Kloster am Berg Popa, der heiligen Stätte des Nat-
Kults residiert hatte, und U Saddhammasiddhi von Yaukkaw, der
in einem Vorort von Rangoon ein grosses und viel besuchtes Klo-
ster geleitet hatte. Der zuletzt genannte Ex-Mönch lebt jetzt als
erfolgreicher Heilpraktiker in Rangoon.

Wie immer man die Reformmassnahmen im einzelnen bewerten
mag, so ist doch jetzt schon deutlich, dass der mit ihnen zum Aus-
druck kommende neue Fundamentalismus einen tiefen Einschnitt
in der geschichtlichen Entwicklung des buddhistischen Ordens in
Birma bedeutet und das gesamte religiöse Leben des Landes nach-
haltig beeinflussen wird. Wie dargelegt, handelt es sich bei dieser
Ordensreform im Prinzip um nichts Neues, sondern um die Wie-
derbelebung alter Traditionen in einer nur äusserlich modernisier-
ten Form. Eine nur im modernen birmanischen Buddhismus zu
beobachtende Besonderheit ist der fundamentalistische Eifer, durch

den eine dogmatisch festgelegte Einheitlichkeit in der Interpretation der Lehre angestrebt wird.

Zum gegenwärtigen Zeitpunkt ist es selbstverständlich noch nicht möglich, den langfristigen Erfolg der Ordensreform abzuschätzen. Wer Birma öfters besucht hat, wird bemerken, dass man dem früher vertrauten Bild von Mönchen im Kino oder im Fussballstadion nicht mehr begegnet. Anhand dieser und ähnlicher Beobachtungen drängt sich der Eindruck auf, dass die Ordensreform von 1980 viel effektiver ist als alle vergleichbaren Versuche der letzten hundert Jahre.

Seminar für Indologie   HEINZ BECHERT
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ANHANG I

WORTLAUT DES BITTBRIEFES ("EPISTLE OF SUPPLICATION") DES INNEN- UND RELIGIONSMINISTERS BRIG.-GEN. SEIN LWIN AN DIE WÜRDENTRÄGER DES SANGHA

Die hier abgedruckte offiziöse Übersetzung ist veröffentlich in: *The Light of the Dhamma*, New Ser., Bd. 1, Heft 2, S. 35-37. Dieses Dokument ist hier mit allen sprachlichen und stilistischen Besonderheiten unverändert abgedruckt.

"May I most humbly and respectfully supplicate to you these words of request, Sir."

Apparently there exists in this country the monastic sects such as Sudhamma, Shwegyin, Mahā Dvāra, Mūla Dvāra and others. It is known from official reports and the epistles forwarded by learned Sayadaws to this Ministry that the Religious Affairs such as the admonition of the disciples and supervision, decision of the religious dispute and cases occurring within the monastic sects are causing many difficulties. It is also reported that some bogus clergymen and imposters are seen who have no evidence of proper initiation and ordination.

Such improper events can blaspheme the Teachings of the Omniscient Buddha. It is, indeed, the sole responsibility of Your Reverence to eradicate such blasphemes and to work for the purification, perpetuation and propagation of the religion. The purification, perpetuation and propagation of the religion is the duty of the Sanghas and therefore must be performed by the Sanghas themselves. We, lay devotees are prepared to support the essential requirements in the performance of the duties of the Sangha.

As there are more than one hundred thousand fully-ordained monks in this Socialist Republic of Union of Burma, the materialization of the work should be

in accordance with the will of all Sanghas of the nation. In view of this, we are planning to celebrate the Convention of General Congregation of the Order of all Sects on the 25th, 26th, 27th, May, 1980 in the Great Rock Cave at Kabā-Aye, in Rangoon to be participated by proper number of elected representatives of the Sangha. It is essential to organize the Sangha Working Committee to arrange the preliminary works for the successful Convention of the Great Assembly.

The Sangha Working Committee is going to be organized with 66 members; 58 from the Sudhamma sect, 5 from the Shwegyin sect, 2 from the Mahā-dvāra sect, and 1 from the Mūla-dvāra sect respectively. Herewith a list of the Members of the Working Committee is presented, as prescribed, according to the number of residential monks of the constituencies.

Your Reverence may please condescend to elect the required members of the Working Committee in accordance with the Dhamma Vinaya Rules and Regulations. To be able to nominate and elect the right members for the right task who can really perform the assignments dutifully, may I express here the specific duties of the Committee.

(1) To draft plans for the successful Convention of the General Assembly of the Order of all sects.

(2) To write the agenda of procedures for the discussions, papers to be read, and decisions to be made at the General Assembly.

(3) To fix the number and qualifications of the representative to be elected and invited to this Convention.

(4) To prescribe techniques and procedures for the election of representatives lawfully.

(5) To distribute necessary papers at various constituencies, and to explain the salient points of referendum to the Sangha and to obtain their willing consents.

(6) To conduct the General Elections at various constituencies so that the proper representatives are lawfully nominated and elected to attend the Convention.

(7) To draw the agenda of the meetings and to make other necessary co-ordinations and to list the names of discussants at the General Assembly.

(8) To perform other essential duties.

Moreover, may I present the required qualifications of Working Committee Members.

(1) Must be well versed in the Canonical Literature and Scriptures.

(2) Must be endowed with piety, honesty, thorough training, and profound devotion to the Vinaya Rules.

(3) Must be endowed with perseverance and be harmony in relation with other members of the Order.

(4) Must be able to perform the assignment dutifully for the accomplishment of the Convention.

For all these reasons, may I supplicate again to Your Reverence to conduct the nomination and election of the Working Committee Members to be in accordance with the Dhamma Vinaya Rules.

Your Reverence may complete the election by 24th January 1980 so that we can invite and welcome the elected members to Rangoon on 1st February, 1980.

With best regards,
Brig.-Gen. Sein Lwin,
Minister,
Ministry of Home and
Religious Affaires

ANHANG II

Text der offiziösen englischen Übersetzung des Gesetzes "for the Settlement of Vinayadhammakamma Adhikaraṇa Disputes" (Pyithu Hluttaw Act No. 3, 1980); veröffentlicht in: *The Light of the Dhamma*, Bd. 1, Heft 1, S. 19-25. Die zu Appendix A und B angegebenen Textstellen beziehen sich auf den kanonischen Vinaya-Text sowie auf die Vinaya-Kommentare und -Subkommentare Samantapāsādikā, Kaṅkhāvitaraṇī, Sāratthadīpanī und Vimativinodanī, jeweils in der vom Sechsten Buddhistischen Konzil festgelegten Textfassung nach der Ausgabe des Buddha Sāsana Council. Wie der Text in Anhang I, ist auch hier der Wortlaut mit allen sprachlichen und stilistischen Eigenheiten — abgesehen von einigen orthographischen Korrekturen — unverändert beibehalten. (Zu den im Gesetzestext angeführten Termini des buddhistischen Ordensrechts siehe C. S. Upasak, *Dictionary of Early Buddhist Monastic Terms*, Varanasi 1975)

CHAPTER I

Title and Definitions

Section 1

This Act may be called the Act for the Settlement of Vinayadhammakamma Adhikaraṇa Disputes.

Section 2

Expressions used in this Act shall have the following meanings:-

(a) Vinayadhammakamma adhikaraṇa disputes means cases which shall justly be settled in consistence with the Rules of Vinaya.

(b) Adhikaraṇa means the four kinds of disputes, namely, vivādādhikaraṇa, anuvādādhikaraṇa, āpattādhikaraṇa and kiccādhikaraṇa, which shall be settled by the 7 ways of settling disputes.

(1) Samatha means the seven ways of settling disputes as mentioned in Appendix A.

(2) Vivādādhikaraṇa means the eighteen kinds of disputes as mentioned in Appendix B.

(3) Anuvādādhikaraṇa means the four kinds of accusation as mentioned in Appendix C.

(4) Āpattādhikaraṇa means the contravention of one of the seven kinds of offences as mentioned in Appendix D.

(5) Kiccādhikaraṇa means the performance of the four Sanghakammas as mentioned in Appendix E.

(c) Sangha Vinicchaya Committee means a body of the learned Vinayadhara Sayadaws constituted for hearing and deciding vinayadhammakamma adhikaraṇa disputes, whether original or appellate.

(d) Vinayadhara means a Sanghasammuti-bhikkhu who is elected by Sangha to hear and decide the disputes according to the Rules of Vinaya.

(e) Codaka means a plaintiff or a complainant in the case of vinayadhammakamma adhikaraṇa disputes, who establishes the guilt of a defendant or the accused, and seeks a decision.

(f) Cuditaka means a defendant or the accused who is alleged to be guilty in the case of vinayadhammakamma adhikaraṇa disputes.

(g) Sāsana properties means the following:-

    (1) Sāsana mye:- the sanctuary land which is prescribed by the authority in accordance with the relevant law;

    (2) the sanctuary land which is traditionally accepted and widely known for a great number of years;

    (3) Sīmā:- ordination halls, monasteries, wells, ponds, rest houses (zayats) etc. which are constructed and donated on the sanctuary land;

    (4) the appropriate requisites offered to the members of the monastic Order (bhikkhu-sangha);

    (5) the wealth, gold, silver, copper and all the movable and immovable properties donated to the cetiya-pagodas, monasteries, kyaungtaik and for nava-kamma utilities.

(h) Kyaung means the building owned and actually resided by the bhikkhu-sangha.

(i) Kyaungtaik means a group of monasteries built within a monastic precinct.

(j) Procedures means the Procedure approved and adopted by the Congregation of Sangha of All Orders for the settlements of vinayadhammakamma adhikaraṇa disputes.

CHAPTER II

Hearing of Vinayadhammakamma Adhikaraṇa Disputes

Section 3

Vinayadhammakamma adhikaraṇa disputes, whether original or appellate, shall be heard and decided in accordance with the Rules of Vinaya only by the Sangha-Vinicchaya Committee and Special Vinayadhara Committee constituted in accordance with the Procedures.

Section 4

If the Sangha-Vinicchaya Committee requests to summon the codaka or cuditaka who fails to appear before it, the Executive Committee of the State or Divisional or Township People's Council concerned shall issue summons to the codaka or cuditaka to appear before the Sangha-Vinicchaya Committee.

CHAPTER III

Custody of all Properties involved in the Vinayadhammakamma Adhikaraṇa Disputes during the Hearing

Section 5

If the cause of vinayadhammakamma adhikaraṇa dispute involves any building such as sīmā-ordination hall, monastery, rest house (zayat) etc., or the whole kyaung-taik, and if it is found necessary to remove all persons or a person from that building and kyaung-taik, the Executive Committee of the Township People's Council concerned shall take action in accordance with the law.

Section 6

If it is necessary to remove all persons under section 5, the Executive Committee of the Township People's Council may assign a suitable body or a person to take custody of that building or kyaung-taik during the pendency of the case.

Section 7

If the vinayadhammakamma adhikaraṇa dispute involves movable properties, the Executive Committee of the Township People's Council concerned shall make an inventory of the properties in the presence of both parties and take custody thereof as may be necessary.

CHAPTER IV

Enforcement of the Decision of Sangha-Vinicchaya Committee

Section 8

The Executive Committee of the Township People's Council concerned shall cause a codaka or a cuditaka to abide by decision of the Sangha-Vinicchaya Committee
   (I)   after the expiry of the period for appeal prescribed by the Procedures, if he has not submitted an appeal;
   (II) after disposal of the appeal if he has submitted an appeal.

CHAPTER V

Miscellaneous

Section 9

The Executive Committee of the State or Divisional or Township People's Council concerned shall carry out the executive functions prescribed in the Procedures.

Section 10

Vinayadhammakamma adhikaraṇa disputes disposed of before this Law comes into force shall not be entertained and decided by any Sangha-Vinicchaya Committee.

Section 11

Relevant bodies empowered by the Procedures shall proceed with the disposal of vinayadhammakamma adhikaraṇa disputes pending on the day this Law comes into force.

Section 12

No suit shall be instituted in any court of law over vinayadhammakamma adhikaraṇa disputes.

Section 13

The Minister for Home and Religious Affairs is hereby conferred with duties and rights in order to be able to implement successfully the provisions of the Law.

APPENDIX A

The 7 Ways of Settling Disputes

1. Sammukhāvinaya: the Rules of Vinaya for settling disputes in the presence of Sangha, Dhamma, Vinaya and persons.
2. Sativinaya: the Rules of Vinaya given to the Arahat who has full diligent attention.
3. Amuḷhavinaya: the Rules of Vinaya given to the insane bhikkhu like Gaggabhikkhu.
4. Patiññātakaraṇa-vinaya: the Rules of Vinaya given according to one's confession.
5. Yebhuyyasika-vinaya: the Lawful decision given according to the vote of majority, of the righteous bhikkhus (dhammavādī-puggala).
6. Tassapāpiyasika-vinaya: the Rules of Vinaya dealt with the foolish monk like Upavāla bhikkhu.
7. Tiṇavatthāraka-vinaya: the Rules of Vinaya just like "the act of covering the dirty matter with grass".
(Vinaya IV, pp. 188-210, Kaṅkhāvitaraṇī, pp. 289, Chaṭṭha Saṅgāyana Version)

APPENDIX B

Eighteen kinds of Disputes (vivādādhikaraṇa)

Disputing that –

  1. which is not Dhamma (akusalakammapatha) to be Dhamma (kusalakammapatha).
  2. which is Dhamma (kusalakammapatha) to be not Dhamma (akusalakammapatha).
  3. which is Rule of Vinaya to be not Rule of Vinaya.
  4. which is not Rule of Vinaya to be Rule of Vinaya.
  5. which is not expounded by the Buddha to be expounded by Him.
  6. which is expounded by the Buddha to be not expounded by Him.
  7. which was not practised by the Buddha as being practised by Him.
  8. which was practised by the Buddha to be not practised by Him.
  9. which is not prescribed by the Buddha to be prescribed by Him.
10. which is prescribed by the Buddha to be unprescribed by Him.
11. which entails offence as not entailing offence.
12. which does not entail offence as entailing offence.
13. which is a light offence (five groups of offences such as thullaccaya offence etc.) to be a grave one (pārājika and saṅghādisesa).
14. which is a grave offence to be a light one.
15. which is an offence that destroys the remaining observances (pārājika) as not destroying them (six groups of offences such as saṅghādisesa, etc.).
16. which is an offence that does not destroy the remaining observances to be destroying them.
17. which is grave offence (pārājika and saṅghādisesa) to be not grave transgression of offences (such as thullaccaya, etc.).
18. which is an offence that is not grave transgression to be grave.
(Vinaya III, pp. 501, Vinaya Commentary I, pp. 113, Sāraṭṭhadīpanī III, pp. 121, Vimativinodanī II, pp. 257, Chaṭṭha Saṅgāyana Edition).

APPENDIX C

Four Kinds of Accusation (anuvādādhikaraṇa)

1. Accusation with the loss of virtue, any of the four offences of Pārājika and thirteen offences of Saṅghādisesa.
2. Accusation with the loss of practise, any of the Thullaccaya, Pācittiya, Pāṭidesanī, Dukkaṭa and Dubbhāsita.
3. Accusation with the loss of right view (diṭṭhi vipatti).
4. Accusation with the loss of right living (ājīva vipatti), with any of the six kinds of evil earning of life.

APPENDIX D

Contravention of 7 kinds of Offences (āpattādhikaraṇa)

1. Pārājika āpatti:	an offence which entails the loss of monkhood.
2. Saṅghādisesa āpatti:	an offence which requires the Formal Meeting of Sangha for exoneration at the beginning, in the middle and at the end.
3. Thullaccaya āpatti:	the most grave transgression among the remaining five groups of offences.
4. Pācittiya āpatti:	the offence which exhausts the wholesome moral consciousness (kusala citta).
5. Pāṭidesanīya āpatti:	the offence which must be confessed formally being censured by the Elders.
6. Dukkaṭa āpatti:	offence due to bodily and verbal bad actions.
7. Dubbhāsi āpatti:	offence due to verbal action.

APPENDIX E

Performance of the 4 Sangha-Kamma (kiccādhikaraṇa)

1. Apalokanakamma:	the performance of the Sanghakamma with the consent of the unanimous Sangha, announcing the subject matter three times to seek the willingness of the Order.
2. Ñattikamma:	the performance of Sangha-kamma with only an announcement (ñatti) and without a declaration of kammavācā.
3. Ñattidutiyakamma:	the performance of Sangha-kamma with one announcement (ñatti) and one declaration of kammavācā.
4. Ñatticattuthakamma:	the performance of Sangha-kamma with one announcement (ñatti) and three times of declaration of kammavācā.

U Pe Than angelegte Sammlung von Berichten über die Sangha-Reform aus "Working People's Daily" und "The Guardian" benützen. Bei der Umrechnung der Jahreszahlen birmanischer Zeitrechnung ist, soweit mir nicht exakte Monatsangaben vorlagen, nicht berücksichtigt, dass jeweils zwei Kalenderjahre nach unserer Zeitrechnung in Frage kommen.

LIMINAL RITES AND FEMALE SYMBOLISM IN THE EGYPTIAN ZAR POSSESSION CULT

RICHARD NATVIG

The *zār* cult in North Africa, the Sudan, Egypt, Arabia, and Iran, is a spirit possession cult which appears to have originated in central Ethiopia in the eighteenth century. It seems to have been introduced into the Middle East by Ethiopian slaves around or before the middle of the last century.[1]

In all regions where it is found, but especially in the Middle East, the cult is basically a woman's religious activity, considered unorthodox and as such often criticized and ridiculed by men and the educated. At times it has been banned by religious and political authorities.

Very briefly, the theory of the *zār* cult is that there exist a great number of *zār* spirits, euphemistically called 'Lords', 'Masters', 'Angels', or 'Blessed Ones'.[2] When disturbed they are liable to possess human beings, thereby causing some sort of illness or deviant behaviour patterns in the victim. It is possible, however, to come to terms with the spirits, and this is the purpose of the *zār* cult.

A person suspected of having been possessed by a *zār* spirit is taken to the local *zār* leader, usually a woman, who considers the circumstances of the affliction. To settle the case she may then suggest a ritual diagnosis, during which contact with the *zār* spirit world is established. If the ritual diagnosis shows that the person is indeed possessed by a *zār* spirit, steps have to be taken to reconcile the spirit. One has to satisfy the spirit's terms for withdrawing the affliction. These terms, which are revealed during the ritual diagnosis, regularly consist of the victim's celebrating a sacrificial ceremony for the spirit. Furthermore, in this ceremony she has to wear special clothes, ornaments, and amulets, the types of which are decided by the particular spirit possessing her. In order to maintain the new relationship with the spirit, the possessed person has to renew the agreement with the spirit by repeating the

sacrificial ceremony in accordance with this agreement, usually once a year.

Those possessed by *zār* spirits become members, by virtue of that possession, of *zār* cult groups that consist of a community of fellow sufferers, with a *zār* leader who is also possessed. The sacrificial ceremony can be regarded as a ritualization of the introduction into a cult group of a person who has already been 'elected' by the *zār* spirits. Besides the sacrificial ceremonies held by individual new and old members of a cult group, weekly ceremonies of a less elaborate kind are held, consisting of music, singing, dancing, and ritual possession experiences.

As we shall see presently, the sacrificial ceremony has the structure of a *rite de passage*, with a protracted liminal period rich in multivalent ritual symbolism.[3] While the ritual procedure may very from place to place in duration, amount of ritual paraphernalia and ritual personnel, etc., these differences appear to be due primarily to external factors, such as financial resources or time available, and the same basic ritual structure underlies the sacrificial ceremony as we find it in the Sharkiya villages, in Cairo, among Nubians in Upper Egypt, and even in the Sudan, at least in the Khartoum area.[4]

The purpose of this paper is to investigate the logic and meaning of this sacrificial ceremony. Let me start by giving a synopsis of the ceremony as it is practiced in some villages in the Sharkiya province in Egypt.

The sacrificial ceremony, which is held in the home of the patient, is called *farah*—'wedding', and the patient is called *ʿarūsa*, 'bride'. Like the wedding, the *zār* ceremony is preceded by a *leilat al-ḥinnāʾ*—'henna evening', when the woman cleans and grooms herself, and applies henna to her hands and feet. She then dresses in a new clean dress, either white, the colour of a bride, or a colour specifically ordered by the spirit, and she adorns herself with gold and silver ornaments and amulets. The *zār* henna evening may take place on the day of the sacrificial ceremony itself, or in the evening before. In the latter case, the *zār* bride has to spend the following night alone.

The main ceremony begins the following afternoon. The *zār* leader fumigates the room, the musical instruments, and the guests

as they arrive. After a recitation of *al-fātiḥa*—i.e. the opening surah of the Qur'an—follows music, singing, and dancing accompanied by ritual possession.

Later, in the evening, preparations begin for the sacrifice. The sacrificial animals or birds that have been ritually cleaned in advance are carried or led by the 'bride' in a procession seven or ten times circling a table called *al-kursī*, lit. 'the chair' or 'the stool'. *Al-kursī* is covered by a white cloth and decorated with lighted candles. Displayed on it are dishes of dates, nuts, chocolate and other sweets, fruit, and certain desserts made of rice or rice meal, milk and sugar. The procession is called *zaffa*, a word which is also used for a bridal procession, and the other participants may carry lighted candles: 'like in a wedding procession', as one of my informants put it.

After the procession, which is accompanied by songs and music associated with the 'bride's' particular spirit, the sacrifice takes place in an adjoining room or in the courtyard. The crucial moment here is when the blood is poured over the 'bride', who rubs it well into her skin so that most of her body is covered. Sometimes she may drink some of the blood. In this way the spirit, which is thought to inhabit the body of the 'bride', may partake directly of the sacrifice. This sacrifice and the rubbing with the blood is called *ṣulḥa*—'reconciliation', which means that the spirit is thereby reconciled. The 'bride' is then conducted back into the main room, according to some writers in a majestic procession.[5]

After more dancing, and the distribution of the sweets and nuts etc. on *al-kursī*, the sacrificial meat, which now has been cooked, is served. In some places the 'bride' is fed by the *zār* leader or her helpers. This meal concludes the sacrificial ceremony proper.

Now the 'bride' has to be confined in a dark room for three, five, or seven days. Only her family, her husband excluded, may see her, but nobody must touch her. She is expressly forbidden to sleep with her husband. She may not wash away the blood on her skin or change her bloody clothes, and she is not allowed to speak. On the final day of the confinement period the 'bride' picks up the remains from the sacrifice: the hide, feathers, bones, entrails, and leftovers from the meal, which have been bundled up in a cloth, and walks down to the Nile or a canal (running water) without

speaking on the way. At the riverside she throws the bundle into the water. Alternatively, the remains may be buried in the ground under the house.

After this the 'bride' may wash herself and put on clean clothes, thereby terminating the confinement period and its rules, and also the 'bridal' state: she is no longer a 'bride'. She is once more approachable, and supposedly on her way to recovery, as long as she keeps her obligations towards the *zār* spirit.

The idea immediately comes to mind that we may find a key to an understanding of the ceremony in the wedding motif: it is called 'wedding' or 'wedding with the Masters' (*farah ma ͨa al-asyād*), the ritual subject is called 'bride' or 'bride of the *zār*' (ͨ*arūsat al-zār*), and many of its ritual features parallell marriage rites.[6]

We know that the marriage idiom is frequently used to represent the relationship between a devotee and the spirit by whom he or she is regularly possessed, particularly, it seems, where stress is laid on the contractual nature of the relationship.[7] The bond between a spirit and its human subject entails rights and duties in the same manner as human wedlock, and is considered as binding as mortal unions, if not more so. In the *zār* cult, the contractual element is accentuated: The sacrifice is the seal of the agreement already reached between the possessed person and her spirit. The sacrificial act, and by extension the whole ceremony, is called *al- ͨaqd*—'the contract/treaty'—, underlining the importance of this aspect of the relationship between the spirit and the possessed person.[8]

Cynthia Nelson starts from 'the view that the zar symbolizes more fundamental motifs of culture, that is (as a symbolic act) the zar expresses basic conceptions of self and the world including the entire realm of man-woman relationship [...].'[9] The *zār* marriage represents the relationship between the spirit and the possessed person as one between husband and wife, and as the husband is the master and the wife is his subject, so is the spirit master and the possessed person its subject. '[...] the two institutions, *zār* and marriage, involve placating a superior, and are parellell; therefore the zar symbolizes the conjugal role and self image of the woman. At most, all the woman can do is try to manipulate her husband and her spirit to get what she wants.'[10]

Using a different procedure and also taking account of other ritual-symbolic parallels than the marital ones, the following analysis seems to both corroborate and supplement Nelson's conclusions.

Like the wedding ceremony, the *zār* ceremony is a *rite de passage*, and the 'bridal' state is clearly connected with its liminal phase. We have the rites of separation which transform the woman into a bride, we have the liminal phase when she is treated like a bride, and the rites of aggregation when she returns to normal life again, no longer a bride.

It may be helpful to consider for a moment what an *ᶜarūsa* is in Egypt. A bride is a transitional being, moving from one culturally defined state to another.[11] She is neither a marriagable woman any more, living as a daughter in her parents' home with the particular status set pertaining to that position, nor is she yet a wife, living with her husband's family with the new combination of statuses and role expectations that this position entails.

The *zār* bride, too, is a transitional being, having left, symbolically, one state of being, characterized by illness and sorrow, moving towards a new state of being, i.e. a life characterized by health and happiness. The term 'bride', incidentally, is a suitable generic name for a liminal person, since a liminar is one who is structurally indefinable, 'betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention, and ceremonial.'[12] Liminal persons are on the one hand 'no longer classified'. On the other hand, they are 'not yet classified' since they are being 'grown' into a new state or position.[13] The term 'bride' defines the woman as a liminal being, and as a matter of fact, *ᶜarūsa*/'bride' is also used to designate girls being circumcised and women giving birth. It is frequently the case that those who are being initiated into very different states of life are designated by the same name. 'It would seem from this', Victor Turner observes, 'that emphasis tends to be laid on the transition itself, rather than on the particular states between which it is taking place.'[14]

Although Arnold van Gennep did point out 'the existence [in *rites de passage*] of transitional periods which sometimes acquire a certain autonomy',[15] Turner was the first to draw our attention to the importance of the liminal phase in ritual and of liminality in society

and culture in general. Turner concluded his article 'Betwixt and
Between: The Liminal Period in *Rites de Passage*', with 'an invita-
tion to investigators of ritual to focus their attention on the
phenomena and processes of mid-transition. It is these, I hold, that
paradoxically expose the basic building blocks of culture just when
we pass out of and before we re-enter the structural realm.'[16] I shall
apply some of Turner's observations concerning the liminal period
in my analysis of the *zār* ceremony described above.

  In the liminal phase of ritual one usually finds a simplification,
even elimination, of social structure, accompanied by a rich pro-
liferation of symbols. I would like to draw attention to two charac-
teristics of liminal symbolism which are of relevance to our discus-
sion of the *zār* ceremony. The first is the principle of the economy
of symbolic reference, whereby the same symbolism is used to
represent logically antithetical processes. 'This coincidence',
Turner writes, 'of opposite processes and notions in a single
representation characterizes the peculiar unity of the liminal: that
which is neither this nor that, and yet is both.'[17] We shall see in
a moment how the blood and other ritual elements in the *zār*
ceremony are involved on different levels of symbolism at the same
time.

  The second characteristic of liminal symbolism I want to men-
tion is that it is often modelled on human biological processes which
are conceived as equivalent to structural and cultural processes.
'They give', according to Turner, 'an outward and visible form to
an inward and conceptual process.'[18] Thus, since liminal persons
can be said to be 'no longer classified', the symbols that represent
them are frequently drawn from the biology of death or other
negative physical processes. On the other hand, the fact that they
are also 'not yet classified' is often expressed by symbols modelled
on bodily processes of gesturation and parturition, and these
antithetical physical processes may be represented by a single sym-
bolic referent, due to the economy of symbolism just mentioned.
Thus, in many cultures, blood may stand for both death and life.
In the *zār* cult, the death of the 'bride' is symbolized by the death
of the sacrificial victim: In order to make the sacrifice effective as
a ransom—the 'bride' has offended the spirits and must redeem
herself—, the victim must be made to represent the sacrifier ('the

subject to whom the benefits of sacrifice [...] accrue, or who undergoes its effects').[19] This is achieved by subjecting both to essentially the same set of ritual acts (washing, fumigating, circling *al-kursī* together, etc.), culminating in a symbolic identification of the two when the blood of the victim flows. By rubbing herself with the victim's blood, the 'bride' identifies symbolically with the dead animal, and she herself symbolically dies from her previous condition.[20] Thus the blood seems to signify the death of the 'bride' (or her former state). Liminal death, however, is a death which contains the germ of new life, and this too is symbolized by the blood: The 'bride' is covered with blood like a newborn baby; she may be fed like an infant; during the confinement period she is not allowed to speak, like a child who has not yet learnt to speak; and there are other ritual elements paralleling those that surround a newborn baby and its mother.[21]

However, the blood of birth is involved in a wider context of specifically female physiological symbolism, reflecting the *zār* cult's development in a feminine milieu, as we shall see now.

I mentioned above that the term 'bride' occurs not only in connection with marriage and in the *zār* cult, but is also used of a girl to be circumcised and a woman in child-bed. This is the case in North Sudan. In Egypt a girl is called 'bride' at her circumcision in those areas where this is still a ritual occasion, i.e. in Upper Egypt and among the Nubians. I have been unable to verify if a woman giving birth is, or was, actually called a 'bride' in Egypt, but this is of little importance for our analysis since, once again, in many ways she is treated like a bride.[22]

The circumcision rites, the wedding rites, and the birth rites may be regarded as constituents of a ritual whole, i.e. the total ritual cycle through which a woman will pass in the course of her life.[23] These three ceremonial events have rites and symbols in common, and the one ceremony points to the next. Circumcision is a preparation for marriage, and the wedding ceremony in its turn anticipates childbearing.[24]

A woman in this village society is defined primarily in terms of her domestic and maternal functions, but the former aspect of female role expectation is of only secondary significance in relation to women's principal function of bearing children, preferably boys.

Women who do not fulfill this function are considered less than nor-
mal.[25] A barren woman risks being rejected by her husband. On
the other hand, a woman who proves her fertility by subsequent
births strengthens her position in her family of in-laws, and her
influence and security grow as her children, especially the boys,
mature, and reach a peak when she becomes a mother-in-law.

The point I wish to make is that all these ritual occasions of a
woman's life cycle, when she is a 'bride', are of utmost importance
to her future well-being and happiness, since this is very much
dependent upon her ability to conceive and give birth. These are
crucial events when, according to Egyptian popular belief, her pro-
creative abilities are particularly vulnerable to the threat of super-
natural powers. It is not without danger that initiands enter the
state of liminality, since they are then brought into close contact
with a deity, a superhuman power, the sacred if you like. But when
the rites are performed correctly, the mystical powers of liminality,
according to the purpose of the *rite de passage*, confer upon the ini-
tiands the capacity to undertake successfully the tasks of their new
office, as a wife, a minister, a member of a secret society, a warrior,
etc. They are endowed with additional powers to cope with their
new station of life. Thus, the ritual that the 'bride' is exposed to has
the double purpose of protecting her from the dangers of liminality
and of enhancing her general well-being and especially her fertility.
They 'grow' her, as the Bemba of Northern Zimbabwe said of their
girls' initiation rites.[26]

These considerations can be applied to the ritual symbolism of
the *zār* cult. A person who submits to the *zār* ceremony has already
been exposed to an attack by negative forces. In order to regain
health, she must once more expose herself to these powers by enter-
ing the liminal state, i.e. by becoming a 'bride'. But this state, as
we have seen, carries in it a possibility of change to the better. In
the life cycle ritual what is at stake is a woman's procreative powers,
and consequently her future well-being. In the *zār* cult one is con-
cerned with the woman's health in the widest possible sense,
including her ability to bear children.

The bridal state points towards childbirth and consequently
security for the woman. From this point of view the marriage sym-
bolism of the *zār* ceremony begins to make sense because it points

towards childbirth, which means: security in marriage, good health, and good fortune in general.

In the course of the *zār* ceremony the 'bride' is bombarded with symbolic assurances of a better life to come. First of all there is the symbol value of the wedding as a whole, and then the symbolism of the many ritual elements which make up the *zār* ceremony, such as henna, gold, the colour white, the nuts, sweets, fruits, the communal meal, dancing, and music, the reading of *al-fātiḥa*, the use of lucky numbers, and so forth. All these symbols and actions stand, in short, for everything that is good.[27] Moreover, every effort is made to ensure that the ceremony is a happy occasion for the 'bride'. Other occasions when a woman is pampered like this are during the first months of pregnancy and after delivery.

This last word, delivery, brings us to the happy occasion of childbirth. The rites following the sacrifice seem to parallell traditional rites after a childbirth. The *zār* bride is bloody, like a woman having given birth; she is confined and must avoid contact with her husband. She may not wash herself and change clothes until after the confinement period, she receives a certain diet, is pampered, and she is a 'bride'.[28] All this is parallelled in traditional post-parturition rites, but there is more. The disposal of the remains after the sacrificial meal either in the river or in the ground underneath the house seems to be modelled on the way the afterbirth is gotten rid of. Both in North Sudan and in Egypt the afterbirth is traditionally carried to the Nile or a canal and thrown into the water, or buried in the ground under the house.[29]

None of my informants made this comparison, and I was not aware of the similarities at the time I did my field work, but Pamela Constantinides, a British social anthropologist who has made a study of the *zār* cult in North Sudan, records that one of her informants, a *zār* leader, explicitly compared the ritual disposal of the remains with the throwing into the Nile of the afterbirth.[30]

The purpose of the post-parturition rites is to protect the newborn baby and the mother's fertility. In the same way, the 'post-parturition' rites of the *zār* cult protect the 'fertility', i.e. health, of the 'new mother', the *zār* bride. She has now become a bride in the sense of having given birth.

For a newly married couple the first birth is proof that the woman is fertile, and it is therefore the factor which will strengthen her position in her family of in-laws. Similarly, the post-parturition rites in the *zār* cult are the symbolic proof that the 'bride' is now 'fertile' in a figurative sense, i.e. that she has recovered from her affliction—the spirits no longer keep up their attack on her and the symptoms will soon abate.

In the female context of the *zār* cult, childbirth is probably the most logical and convincing symbol of the ritual having the intended result. The woman 'marries', and the happy outcome of the relationship is confirmed in the course of the ceremony by the 'post-parturition' rites.

That we are on the right track to understanding the bridal symbolism of the *zār* cult is supported by the fact that a large proportion of the cult members, both in North Sudan and in Egypt, are women who have joined in the *zār* cult because of barrenness or problems with childbirth, which they relate to *zār* spirit possession.[31] That it is correct to interpret this symbolism in the wider sense of general health and happiness is shown by the fact that other groups of women also are attracted to the *zār* cult, as well as some men.

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[1] On the *zār* cult, see for example, Paul Kahle, "Zār-Beschwörungen in Egypten", *Der Islam* 3 (1912); Enno Littmann, *Arabische Geisterbeschwörungen aus Ägypten, Sammlung orientalistischer Arbeiten* 19, Leipzig 1950; Rudolf Kriss, and Hubert Kriss-Heinrich, "Zār", 3rd chapter in *Volksglaube im Bereich des Islam*, Vol. 2, Wiesbaden 1962; Michel Leiris, "Le taurau de Seyfou Tchenger", *Minotaure* No. 2 (1933); *id.*, "Le culte des zārs à Gondar", *Aethiopica* 2 (1934), 3-4. The term "spirit possession cult" refers to a cult in which ceremonial spirit possession is encouraged in individuals who become members of the cult by virtue of an at first uncontrolled possession by a spirit, brought under controll by the individual's incorporation in a cult group. "Cult" is here used as a typology of religious organization, see J. Milton Yinger, *Religion, Society and the Individual; An Introduction to the Sociology of Religion*, New York 1957. For a further discussion of the terms "cult" and "*zār* cult", as well as for a study of the history of the *zār* cult, see Richard Natvig, "Oromos, Slaves, and the *Zār* Spirits: A Contribution to the History of the *Zār* Cult", *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 20 (1987), 4.

² I am here describing the Egyptian *zār* cult. Unless otherwise stated, information on the *zār* cult in this paper is based on a field trip to the Sharkiya province north-east of Cairo, in the autumn of 1980.

³ I use the phrase *rite de passage* to denote the tripartite diachronic ceremonial structure which van Gennep demonstrated characterizes all passages from one situation to another (cf. Arnold van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage*, London 1960). Many anthropologists and historians of religions, however, use *rite de passage* as a taxonomic term in the classification of rituals. Thus, Honko distinguishes between rites of passage, calendrical rites, and crisis rites, where the first category is defined as "traditional rituals organized by society, whereby the individual is moved from one status to another", and is said to include rituals at birth, initiation, marriage, and death. (Lauri Honko, "Theories Concerning the Ritual Process", in: *Science of Religion: Studies in Methodology. Proceedings of the Study Conference of the International Association for the History of Religions, held in Turku, Finland August 27-31, 1973*, ed. by L. Honko, The Hague, Paris, New York 1979.) This two-fold usage of the term *rite de passage* leads to terminological confusion since the *rite de passage structure* is not restricted to the first of Honko's categories but is found in all three of them. To avoid this unnecessary confusion, I propose to call Honko's first category "rites of status change".

⁴ See for instance Kawthar Abdel-Rasoul, "Zar in Egypt", *Wiener Völkerkundliche Mitteilungen* 3 (1955); Kriss and Kriss-Heinrich, *op. cit.*; John G. Kennedy, "Nubian Zar Ceremonies as Psychotherapy", *Human Organization* 26 (1967); Pamela M. Constantinides, Sickness and the spirits: A Study of the Zaar Spirit-Possession Cult in the Northern Sudan, unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of London 1972.

⁵ Cynthia Nelson, "Self, Spirit Possession and World View: An Illustration from Egypt", *International Journal of Social Psychiatry* 17 (1971), p. 200.

⁶ Although the notion of a marital union between a spirit and a possessed person is found explicitly expressed in the *zār* cult context (see e.g. Nelson, *op. cit.*, p. 206), my informants tended to use the wedding as a metaphor: the ceremony is *like* a wedding, etc.

⁷ Ioan M. Lewis, *Ecstatic Religion: An Anthropological Study of Spirit Possession and Shamanism*, Harmondsworth 1978, pp. 59 ff.

⁸ Cf. R. Natvig, Zar-kulten i Egypt: en analyse av kultens religiøse funksjoner, unpublished dissertation, University of Bergen 1982, pp. 114 ff.

⁹ Nelson, *op. cit.*, p. 194.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 205.

¹¹ Cf. Turner's discussion of the term 'state' in Victor Turner, "Betwixt and Between: The Liminal Period in *Rites de passage*", in: *The Forest of Symbols*, Ithaca, New York 1967, pp. 93 f.

¹² Turner, *The Ritual Process*, Harmondsworth 1974, p. 81.

¹³ Turner, 1967, p. 96.

¹⁴ *Loc. cit.*

¹⁵ Van Gennep, *op. cit.*, pp. 191 f.

¹⁶ Turner, 1967, p. 110.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 99.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 96.

¹⁹ Henry Hubert and Marcel Mauss, *Sacrifice: Its Nature and Function*, London 1964, p. 10.

²⁰ For more details, see Natvig, 1982, pp. 102 ff.

²¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 120 ff., and below.

[22] See e.g. Harold B. Barclay, "Study of an Egyptian Village Community", *Studies in Islam* 3 (1966), pp. 210, 211; J. G. Kennedy *"Mushahara*: A Nubian Concept of Supernatural Danger and the Theory of Taboo", in: *Nubian Ceremonial Life*; *Studies in Islamic Syncretism and Cultural Change*, Berkeley 1978, p. 129.

[23] Cf. also P. M. Constantinides " 'Ill at Ease and Sick at Heart': Symbolic Behaviour in a Sudanese Healing Cult", in: *Symbols and Sentiments. Cross-Cultural Studies in Symbolism*, ed. by I. Lewis, London 1977, p. 79.

[24] Cf. in this connection the words that Nubian women sing at girls' circumcision ceremonies: ' "Come, you are now a woman," "You became a bride." "Bring her the groom now" "Bring her a penis, she is ready for intercourse" ', J. G. Kennedy, "Circumcision and Excision Ceremonies", in: *Nubian Ceremonial Life*; *Studies in Islamic Syncretism and Cultural Change*, Berkely 1978, p. 157.

[25] Soheir A. Morsy, "Sex Differences and Folk Illness in an Egyptian Village", in: *Women in the Muslim World*, ed. by L. Beck and N. Keddie, Cambridge, Mass. 1978, pp. 603 ff.; Hamed Ammar, *Growing up in an Egyptian Village*, London 1954, p. 94.

[26] Audrey I. Richards, *Chisungu*, London 1956, p. 121.

[27] Kennedy, 1967, p. 192.

[28] In some places the 'bride' may step over the animal after it has been slaughtered, a custom also reported from the Sudan (Constantinides, 1977, p. 81). Compare this with post-parturition rites where traditionally the mother steps seven (or three) times over the baby. Cf. Barclay, *op. cit.*, p. 210; S. H. Leeder, *Modern Sons of the Pharaohs*, London 1918, p. 92.

[29] Cf. Barclay, *op. cit.*, p. 210; Barclay, *Buurri al Lamaab*; *A Suburban Village in the Sudan*, Ithaca, New York 1964, p. 217.

[30] Constantinides, 1977, p. 81.

[31] Constantinides, 1972, p. 144; Morsy, *op. cit.*, p. 613.

CITIES IN ITALY'S GOLDEN AGE

Stephen Scully

When Saturnus came into Latium, exiled from Olympos, Vergil says, the god found a people untaught and scattered among mountains (*A*. 8.314-25). In leading these people towards civilization, Saturnus introduced them to the pruning fork (cf. Vergil, *G*. 2.406; *falcifer deus*, Ovid, *F*. 1.234), gave laws, and ruled in a golden age of quiet peace (cf. Vergil *A*. 11.252-54).[1] In the transition from that age to a *discolor aetas* (*A*. 8.326), a discolored age characterized by a madness for war and a passion for gain (*amor habendi*), and the rule of Jupiter, the Jovian sword displaced the agricultural tool, greed and an enthusiasm for Mars displaced an aureate education and Saturnian peace (cf. Vergil, *G*. 2.536-40).[2] The line of demarcation often said to separate one age from the other is the city wall built by Romulus on the Palatine, inspired by a sign from Jupiter's birds. The building of the first wall, symbolic of the city behind it, thus, marks the fatal fall from an agrarian Eden, the turn from myth to history, from an idealized rusticity to a contemporary, imperfect human environment. Or so it is commonly argued.

The foundation of the circuit wall, "itself mark of an unSaturnian need for defenses," as one scholar responds to Vergil's georgic lament, "starts Rome on its bellicose path, re-orienting its values away from agrarian to martial gods and altering simple rustic completions into less rational schemes of broader dominion."[3] In this version, Saturnus is exclusively a god of agriculture (as implied by his name, in antiquity derived from *sero* "to sow",[4] and by his wife *Ops*, Plenty, referring to nature's bounty): *cultus* is taken in its root sense of tilled fields and not in its later, but more common, reference to urbanized man. Like the age in which he reigns, Saturnus himself is "golden" (*aureus hanc vitam in terris Saturnus agebat*, Vergil, *G*. 2.538), because "he lived," in Patricia Johnston's analysis, "the life of a farmer ... his name (evoking) a memory of that time of felicity and freedom from toil."[5] The *urbs*, by contrast, is seen as shattering the tranquility of natural man and

beginning the process by which the simple folk of Latium acquire
appetites beyond their control (cf. Ovid, *F.* 1.247-54).

Such commonplaces, or topoi, popular in Rome as in present
criticism, establish equations which distort complexities in the
Roman vision of both the *Saturnia tellus* and *urbs Roma*. The evidence
is very clear, however, even if overlooked, in Vergil as elsewhere,
that the agricultural deity was also a city god who founded (*condidit*)
a walled town (called both an *oppidum* and *arx*) on the Capitoline.
While standing on his rustic Palatine settlement, Evander describes
Saturnus' ancient city as follows (*A.* 8.355-58):

> haec duo praeterea disiectis oppida muris
> reliquias veterumque vides monimenta virorum
> hanc Ianus pater, hanc Saturnus condidit arcem;
> Ianiculum huic, illi fuerat Saturnia nomen.

There can be no ambiguity in such description. These are stately
towns, strongly walled, inhabited by man and god. The phrase *con-
didit arcem*, like the future-looking epithet of Evander *Romanae con-
ditor arcis* (8.313), is a stock formula for Rome's foundation. If one
would wish to translate *arx* as citadel, *oppidum* here and city walls,
muri, suggest *urbs*.

Saturnus' urban achievement is also described earlier in this
same account. In speaking about Saturnus' civilizing Latium's
primitive inhabitants, Evander says that the god settled, or *com-
posuit*, a people formerly dispersed in the high mountains (*dispersum
montibus altis*, 8.321-22). (Compare the phrase *urbem componere* used
to describe the Trojan building of their new city in Italy, *Aeneid*
3.387). The act of leading people down off the mountain into a
unified community is itself analogous to the Zeus-initiated foun-
ding of Troy as described in the *Iliad* (20.215-18):

> First of all cloud-gathering Zeus had a son Dardanos
> who founded Dardania, since there was yet no sacred Ilion
> made into a city in the plain to be a city of mortal men,
> but man lived still in the underhills of Mt. Ida with her many springs.

In both instances, the civilizing process is marked by the settling of
man apart from the mountain terrain where his isolated homes
blend with natural forms. In the Homeric version, the *polis* marks
the first time that man may aspire towards the uniquely human and
in so doing partake in the divine (''holy Troy''). On the human

scale, such a separation of man from nature is analogous to the original separation of earth from sky at the world's beginning. In the Roman image of its golden age, by contrast, Saturnus builds and lives in the city of his inspiration. In this age of god and man living together on Latium's soil, nature and man of the city, flower and well-hewed stone, are not polar antitheses.

Reference to Saturnus' city cannot in any way be regarded as peculiar to this Vergilian passage. Varro writing fifty years earlier claimed that contemporary archaeological evidence corroborated what he called "the ancient written record": in particular, he mentioned the remains of a temple to Saturn by the passage leading to the Capitoline Hill, a Saturnian Gate (presumably for the *oppidum*, or city wall, and not for the temple complex), and the back walls of houses in the area which were still called *muri*, that is "city walls" as opposed to *parietes* or house walls (*De Lingua Latina* 5.42). Cato's description of this city is even more intriguing: *a quo Saturnia olim, ubi nunc Capitolium, et ab ea late Saturnia terra* ("where before (it) was the Saturnia, now it is called the Capitolium, and from there Saturnian land spread far and wide").[6] Cato would have us believe that the presence of Saturnus was first felt in his city rather than in the surrounding land: that is, *Saturnia arx* predates *Saturnia tellus* (*G.* 2.173) or *Saturnia arva* (*A.* 1.569).

How are we to reconcile our image of an agrarian god with this urban identity and what is the relation between this "heavenly" city and historic Rome upon whose foundations it lies? As with many issues of a religious nature, it is impossible to derive a single answer or one that is internally consistent in all respects, but both questions in this instance may be illuminated by comparison with foundation stories and rituals from the Near East. From the Sumerian period of the second millennium to the time of the Neo-Babylonians and from the Tigris-Euphrates to Judea, capital cities of extended kingdoms were perceived as the earthly imitations of celestial archetypes. So Nineveh, the most sacred of all Sumerian cities, took its ground-plan from Ursa Major; Jerusalem was an exact model of a divine plan, etc.[7] At Rome, Saturnus' city lies beneath rather than above the buildings on the Capitolium of the historical period. Sumerian cities, like the much later Neo-Babylonian ones, were divided into two distinct parts, each

separately walled and separately named: an inner house of the god
and administrative center of the city, called a temenos, and an
outer city, the place of human habitation and commerce. The
tutelary deity (male or female) regarded the ziggurat in the inner
temenos as cosmic home. The mountain or rainbow, ''the pure
place, where the water is sweet, ... center of the four corners,''[8] the
ziggurat was also rooted in the holy *abzu*, or subterranean waters,
therefore the place linking heaven and earth, man and god. Not
only *axis mundi* but also *omphalos* of the cosmos. Whether at Nippur,
Babylon, Jerusalem, or any other walled city in the Near East, as
one   enters   the   temple   area,   one   ''transcends   'profane',
heterogenous space, and enters 'pure earth';''[9] that is, man moves
towards pure city and primordial universe. From this sacred point
at the center of the city, ''its ground the life of the land, the life of
all land,'' (in a further elaboration of the ziggurat at Nippur), the
god made the surrounding countryside fecund. In one of many
examples the tutelary god of Lagash (Ningirsu) says to King
Gudea: ''With the founding of my house, overflow will come,/the
large fields will grow high for you,'' etc.[10] In the Near Eastern
hymns, there is a greater emphasis upon the city center than there
is in the Roman literature about its golden age, and the Near
Eastern stories are part of present history and not of a mythic past,
but nevertheless the dual aspect of city and bountiful land is
manifest in both, and on the Roman side especially in Cato's for-
mulation. As from the cosmic navel of Near Eastern cities, it seems
as if Saturnus' divine teaching and name emanated through
Latium soil during Italy's golden, agricultural age from his Satur-
nian city on the Capitoline.

    As regards Rome's foundation myths, then, we see that there are
in fact at least two distinct stories of origins: one of a city founded
by man on the Palatine at the end of the golden age, stained by
sacrilege and bloodshed; the other of a city founded by god on the
Capitolium during Rome's mythic past.[11] Such a duality in Rome's
identity between *urbs Roma* and Capitolium is still very much alive
even during the late Republic and early Empire as may be
witnessed by such formulaic divisions: *lictoresque habent in urbe et
Capitolio*, Caesar *De bello civ.* 1.6; *Capitolio reciperato et urbe pacata*,
Livy 3.18.6; and *non in Capitolio modo sed per totam urbem*, Livy

38.51.13. Of the two, the *urbs* of Romulus on the Palatine, built
after the fall from a Saturnian Eden, grows significantly in time but
from a religious point of view remains unchanged as the *urbs Roma*,
but as we move from myth to history the Saturnian city of the
golden age is remade into a place of pure divinity (with its own
foundation stories), no longer an *oppidum* inhabited by god *and* man
but a *templum* and home of Jupiter Optimus Maximus, Juno, and
Minerva, Rome's most important triad of protecting deities. What
may account for this change? Again, explanations are tenuous but
perhaps we may conjecture the following.

   The Capitolium, on the one hand, becomes the most sacred
religious center of the city and dominates from a religious point of
view all the activities of state. There sacrifice was offered by
magistrates on taking office and by victorious generals when
celebrating a triumph. Jupiter Optimus Maximus was the special
guardian of Rome, as perhaps evidenced in 390 B.C. when the
sacred geese on the Capitol saved the Romans from the Gauls. The
Capitolium was perceived as navel of the world[12] (as the Saturnia
most likely was too if we follow Cato's description). While
excavating the foundations for Jupiter's temple, the Romans
unearthed a human skull, a sign they believed that the Capitolium,
and by extension their city, was to be the *caput rerum*, head of the
universe, and *summum imperi*, seat of universal empire (cf. Livy
5.54.4). It was also here that Jupiter sent down from heaven the
ancile, or shield, as a pledge to King Numa, second ruler of Rome,
that his city was sanctioned with imperial sovereignty: *imperii
pignora certa* (Ovid, *F.* 3.343-78). In ritual, the annual Roman prac-
tice of nailing a peg into the right wall of the temple of Jupiter
Optimus Maximus seems, like the Near Eastern ritual of driving
a peg of the god into his/her temple foundation, a magical means
of keeping the god at home.[13]

   On the other hand, *Roma quadrata*, the *urbs* or *arx* of Rome (for
Rome as *arx*, see Vergil, *A.* 8.313), built on the Palatine suc-
cessively by Evander, Romulus, and Augustus, was never itself
considered sacred. Established like a *templum*[14] and in many ways
like the Capitolium considered the *omphalos* of the world, there is
much to suggest that the *urbs* might have been so perceived. Foun-
dation treatises specify that the outer boundaries (*limites*) were

never drawn without reference to the order of the heavens (*non sine mundi ratione*), while the axial streets were "in line with the course of the sun ... and the axis of the sky,"[15] fixed that is by the criss-cross of sun line and sky-axis: "immovable in and at harmony with the universe at whose centre it was placed; *quod ad equilibrium foret posita.*"[16] The cosmic centripetality of *urbs Roma* is itself suggested by the trench Romulus dug down to solid rock on the founding day (during the festival of Pales, the Parilia). Placed at the center of the *urbs* (the Palatine *urbs*) from which point Romulus marked out the circumference of the city with a furrow, first fruits of the earth were thrown into the botton of it and every man placed a small piece of earth from his own province. Although the pit was clearly chthonic in nature, the Romans called it *mundus*, heaven or universe, suggesting that they envisioned at the center of their *urbs* a marriage of earth and sky, male and female.[17] So again, like the Capitolium, the *urbs Roma* provokes images of *axis mundi* and *omphalos*.

The boundaries of *urbs Roma* were also sanctified, in this instance by the *amburbium* (literally, "around the city"), of Etruscan origin. With a white cow (on the inside) and a white bull (on the outside), moving in a counter-clockwise direction tracing the augury boundary line, the city-founder made the "first-born furrow" (*primigenius sulcus*), an outer, magic wall only broken where the city gates had been designated. Behind the plowman, another man followed to ensure that all clods of earth fell inward. The furrowed indentation was a moat (*fossa*) and the ridge of plowed earth a city wall (*murus*), deemed sacred and inviolable (*hiera kai asylos*, in Plutarch).[18] This wall, even more than the man-made city wall, was often considered the true defence of the city (cf. Cicero, *De Nat. De.* 3.94).

Although Rome may be temple-centered, established like a *templum*, and its borders divinely protected, *urbs Roma* is not considered sacred space. Various civic centers, like the Curia or Rostra, as other purely religious *temenoi* within the *urbs*, were *sacer* or *sanctus*. Similarly, civic bodies, like the *senatus* and *consilium patrum* which carried out the business of state, were holy. Even the abstracted entity of the commonwealth itself, *civitas* or *res publica*, was, though less frequently, called sacred.[19] Cicero helps us understand why (*De Re Publica* VI.13): "nothing is more gratifying to that principal deity who rules the universe than are the assemblies of

men, constituted by law, which are called commonwealths (*civitates*)." But *urbs Roma* is never called holy; nor indeed is any *urbs* in Roman literature, with the exception of Troy and Tarentum.[20] Silence in this case demands investigation.

Sacra Roma, commonly implied in modern scholarship, is lexically unattested and is a concept alien to Roman beliefs about the sacred and the profane.[21] As much as there is a belief at Rome that the abstract entity of commonwealth and the business of state (*respublica*) are consecrated, as are the *loci* where that business is performed (*templa* like the *Senatus* within the *urbs*), the *urbs* itself, as a place of man, is not sufficiently distinct from the earthbound and the mortal. In the intermixture of humanity and "sacredness", the inevitable impurity of man introduces an element of the profane within the sacred domain. As the *amburbium* ritual lifted the plow at city gates because a break in the sacred boundary was necessary for corpses to be carried out of the city, so the city vessel which housed both sanctified *civitas* and paradoxical man was incapable of sharing unilaterally in the divine.

This perhaps explains why the Saturnian city becomes in the historical period sacred *templum*, a "celestial foundation" of pure earth. Such a change suggests an almost obsessive differentiation between pure and impure. Because from a religious point of view man after his fall from the golden age is a contradictory being, it seems necessary for the Romans to make the "heavenly" city of myth a place of pure divinity and divinely sanctioned human activity. The sacred Capitolium, among other places at Rome, bestows a divine aura over what cannot itself in final analysis be considered sacred.

When Aeneas in Book 8 of the *Aeneid* beholds Evander's rustic "Palatine" and the wooded Capitoline Hill across the way, he sees both the remains of a city of a past golden age that anticipates not a future city, but Rome's most *sacra templa*, remade golden by Augustus: *Capitolia.../aurea nunc* (*A*. 8.347-48), and a small Greek settlement that will flourish in time to be the city of greatest worldly power, which, if not sacred itself, may by extension participate in the new golden age.

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¹ Vergil's description in this passage of a golden age in an agrarian world differs from the more conventional Hesiodic account of a golden age in which nature gives spontaneously, rendering human toil and field boundaries unnecessary. For Latin imitations in Vergil as elsewhere of this pre-technological golden age, also identified with a Saturnian reign, see Vergil, *Ecloges* 4; *Georgics* 1.125-28; *Aeneid* 7.203-04; Ovid, *Amores* 3.8.39-44; *Met.* 1.89 ff., etc. So Tibullus (cf. 1.3.35-50) describes an Italian golden age, when Saturnus ruled as king (*rex*), before the need for laws or agriculture. Houses were without doors; horses were ignorant of the bit, bulls of the yoke; and fields were without boundaries (... *non fixus in agris,/qui regeret certis finibus arva, lapis*). In that impossible age without servitude or labor, nature gave spontaneously and the world was free of anger or war. But in this version, Saturnus tames a people of Latin born from stubborn oak who before then neither knew a settled way of life nor were experienced in art (*neque mos neque cultus*). By introducing them to laws and agriculture, Saturnus leads an ignorant race (*genus indocile*) from a primitive past into a golden age, marked by a peaceful rule: *aurea, quae perhibent, illo sub rege fuerant/saecula:sic placida populos in pace regebat* (*A.* 8.324-25).

² In Tibullus, as well, the introduction of war and bondage marks the end of freedom (Saturnus as *rex*, 1.35) and the beginning of tyranny (Jupiter as *dominus*, 1.49).

³ Michael Putnam, *Virgil's Poem of the Earth* (Princeton, 1979) 159.

⁴ It is more probable that the name Saturnus, like Turnus, is Etruscan in origin, identifying a god (*Lua*) Saturnus of cleansing and purification against blight. For a discussion of Saturnus in this capacity, see R. M. Ogilvie, *Early Rome and the Etruscans* (Atlantic Highlands, N.J., 1976), 106; for Roman etymologies, see Varro, *De Lingua Latina* 8.36, Livy 8.16, and Aulus Gellius 13.23.2.

⁵ Patricia Johnston, *Virgil's Agricultural Golden Age*, Mnemosyne Suppl. #60 (Amsterdam, 1980) 52 and 89.

⁶ *Origines* (frag.) quoted by La Certa, reprinted in T. E. Page, *The Aeneid of Virgil: Books VII-XII* (London, 1909), ad 8.357. Cf. C. Julius Solinus (3rd cent. A.D.), 2.5.

⁷ Cf. P. Wheatley, *City as Symbol* (Inaugural Lecture, University College London) (London, 1969), 9-22, and M. Eliade, *Patterns in Comparative Religion*, trans. by Rosemary Sheed (N.Y., 1958), 375-82. See also Gustave E. von Grunebaum, "The Sacred Character of Islamic Cities," in *Islam and Medieval Hellenism: Social and Cultural Perspectives* ed. Dunning Wilson (London, 1976), 25-37; James Dougherty, *The Five Square City: The City in the Religious Imagination* (Notre Dame and London, 1980), 1-23; and the seminal work by A. J. Wensinck, "The Idea of the Western Semitics concerning the Navel of the Earth," *Verhandelingen der Koninklijke Akademie van Wetenschappen te Amsterdam* n.s. 17 (1916), 23-30 and chap. XI (*passim*).

⁸ A description of the ziggurat at Nippur, found in Pritchard, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts* 3rd ed. (Princeton, 1969), "The Hymn to Enlil, the All Beneficent," p. 573-76 (lines 65 ff.).

⁹ M. Eliade, *op. cit.*, 376.

¹⁰ Quoted from the Gudea Cyclinder found in S. Kramer, *The Sacred Marriage: Aspects of Faith, Myth, and Ritual in Ancient Sumer* (Bloomington, Ind., 1969), 32. See similar hymns and promises in Gene Gragg, *The Kes Temple Hymn* and Ake Sjoberg and E. Bergmann, *The Collection of the Sumerian Temple Hymns* (both under the same cover) (Locust Valley, N.Y., 1969).

¹¹ Historically, the twin stories may refer to the pre-Roman Etruscan citadel/temple of the sixth century on the Capitolium and the pre-Roman Latium city of the eighth century on the Palatine.

¹² Although there is no suggestion that the Romans saw the formation of their capitol city occuring at the world's beginning, as is found in the myths of Babylon and Jerusalem for example, they did claim that the gods left the earth from Italian soil. For this reason, the land of Italy was blessed with a prosperity and peace unknown to other lands. In contrast to a rich but violent nature in the rest of the world, Italy itself even in the historical era continued to enjoy nature's bounty, as Vergil tells us in language remininscent of golden age description: gentle, rich in livestock, twice fertile within a year (cf. *G.* 2.136-54; cf. Varro, *De Re Rustica* 1.2.6).

¹³ Einar Gjerstad, *Early Rome V: The Written Sources* (Lund, 1973), 76 and 100-01. Cf. Hanell, *Das altrömische eponyme Amt* (Lund, 1946), 123-30 and 175-78. For the widespread Near Eastern practises, see Richard Ellis, *Foundation Deposits in Ancient Mesopotamia* (New Haven, Conn., 1968), 77-93 and 139.

¹⁴ Like a *templum*, its cosmic coordinates, the outer circle squared within, were measured by priests reading signs from Jupiter's birds. At the end of the first Catilinarian (sec. 33), Cicero states perhaps in a rhetorical flourish that the city of Rome (*urbs*) and *templum* of Jupiter Stator (the place of his address) were founded in fact by the same auspices: "You, Jupiter, who were established by Romulus by means of the same auspices as those by which this city was established, you whom we truly call the Protector (Stator, i.e. guarantor of Rome's future) of this city and its rule (*imperium*), keep Catiline and his gang from your temples and those of the other gods, from buildings and city walls, from the life and welfare of our citizens." See Ann Vasaly, *The Spirit of the Place: The Rhetorical Use of Locus in Cicero's Speeches* (PhD Diss., U. of Indiana, 1983), 125.

¹⁵ Cf. C. O. Thulin, *Corpus Agrimensorum Romanorum cum addendis*: (Stuttgart, 1971), A110-B207, p. 131; see also Rykwert, *The Idea of a Town: The Anthropology of Urban Form in Roman Italy and the Ancient World* (Princeton, 1976), 90-91.

¹⁶ Rykwert, *ibid.*, p. 98; for *quod ad aequilibrium foret positá*, see C. Julius solinus 1.17 (from Varro).

¹⁷ Cf. Ovid, *F.* 4.819-36, where he says "pressing on the ploughshare, Romulus drew a furrow to mark the line of the wall (*inde premens stivam designat moenia sulco*); Plutarch's phrase *ad Romulus* 11.2 is more descriptive: taking the *mundus* as a center, they marked out the city in a circle (*osper kyklon kentroi perigrapsen polin*). Contrary to Plutarch's interesting error, the Romans must have considered that the *mundus*, or augural center, of their city was on the Palatine and not "around the Comitium" as he has it. The Parilia itself, or the day chosen for this founding ritual, falls on April 21, traditionally held to be Rome's birthday, and the god honored, Pales, is sexually ambiguous described as either male or female; cf. Howard H. Scullard, *Festivals and Ceremonies of the Roman Republic* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1981), 103-05.

¹⁸ For *fossa* and *murus*, see Varro, *De Lingua Latina* 5.143; for the first-born furrow, see Paulus Diaconus, *Epitoma Festi* ed. Lindsay (Stuttgart, 1913), p. 236M; for Plutarch's commentary, see *Roman Questions* #27. For contemporary discussion, see Scullard, *op. cit.*, 82-3 and his *The Etruscan Cities and Rome* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1967), 73-77 and 246; Giuseppe Lugli, "Il Pomerio e la Mura," in *Itinerario di Roma antica* (Milan, 1970), 18-24; Rykwert, *op. cit.*, 132-35. Roman colonies (with Forum, Comitium, and temple of the Capitoline triad) were founded, according to Varro, "in just the same way as Rome" (*quod item conditae ut Roma*, 5.143); cf.

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F. T. Salmon, *Roman Colonization Under the Republic* (London, 1969), 38-9 and his *The Making of Roman Italy* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1982), 64-66.

[19] A simple example of this is illustrated by the stipulation that senatorial decrees, *senatusconsulta*, were only valid when issued from a *templum* but not if deliberated elsewhere within the *pomerium* (the city's sacred borders).

[20] Troy, frequently called holy in Homer, is said to be *sacra* in Vergil, *A.* 2.245, and in Horace, *Odes* 3.19.5. Horace also calls the Greek Tarentum *sacra, ad Odes* 1.28.29.

[21] Cf. E. Benveniste, *Indo-European Language and Society* trans. Elizabeth Palmer (Coral Gables, Fl., 1973), 461: "The sense of *sacer* is brought out by its opposition to *profanus* 'outside the *fanum*'. The domain of the *sacer* is a domain separated by the very arrangement of the places. Making *sacer* consisted in making a kind of entrenchment, of putting something outside the human domain by attribution to the divine. In *hieros*, on the other hand, ... we find a property which is sometimes permanent and sometimes incidental which can result from an infusion of the divine, from some divine circumstance or invention." In contrast to Roman beliefs, the Greek *polis* was always considered sacred (*hiera*, but also *egathea, zathea,* and *dia* in Homer; later also *thea,* cf. Pindar *P* 4.260-61 *theion...asty,* etc.). *Ilios hire* is the most common epithet for Troy in the *Iliad*; even as late as the twelfth century A.D., the archbishop of Thessalonica Eustathius commenting on the *Iliad ad* 1.366 said that every *polis* was holy, but this is a subject for another paper.

VIVA SAN JUAN*

Il culto di San Giovanni Battista in area mesoamericana. Alcuni esempi

EDMONDO LUPIERI

1) Giovanni Battista e la tempesta; un triangolo caraibico

"Un dato giorno dell'anno, Dio permette a ciascun santo di controllare l'universo. San Giovanni Battista, però, è così irresponsabile, e la sua ira così violenta, che Dio teme le conseguenze che ci sarebbero se gli permettesse di esercitare il potere nel suo giorno. Ingannandolo con una bevuta il giorno prima, lo rende così ubriaco che, una volta addormentato, si sveglia solo il giorno dopo. Quando gli dicono che il suo giorno è già passato, la sua rabbia è terribile e fa flagellare la terra da grandi tempeste. E' parere diffuso a Mirebalais che quel giorno sia segnato da tempeste che sono quasi uragani, con grande abbondanza di tuoni e fulmini. Benché possa fare qualche danno, tuttavia ora il suo potere è limitato alla sfera che gli è propria".

Con questo racconto, nel 1937 lo Herskovits riproduceva un mito da lui raccolto nel villaggio haitiano di Mirebalais, mito relativo al potente *loa Saint Jean Baptiste*,[1] entità di tutto rilievo nel pantheon dei voduisti negri haitiani. In quanto succedaneo di *Šango*, *oriša* del fuoco e del fulmine,[2] nonché della tempesta,[3] *Loa St. Jean Baptiste* sarebbe uno degli esempî più chiari di sincretismo afrocristiano realizzatisi nel Nuovo Mondo. Anzi, commentando il mito qui riprodotto, il Métraux ebbe ad esclamare che, "sotto il suo rivestimento cristiano, (esso) conserva tutto il suo sapore africano".[4] Sembra accertato, invece, che il racconto sul sonno del Battista durante la propria festa sia di origine europea, non africana,[5] e che, comparendo nel Nuovo Mondo a diverse latitudini, sia forse il Brasile l'area in cui si presenta nella versione più "europea", connessa con i "fuochi di San Giovanni" e con un temuto incendio del mondo intero ad opera del Santo.[6] La notivà haitiana, allora, non è nella struttura del mito, ma sarebbe nella connessione del Battista con la tempesta; *Šango*, infatti, pur essendo una sorta di sputafuoco,[7] è soprattutto un dio del fulmine (col quale punisce chi trascura i proprî doveri religiosi)[8] e delle precipitazioni atmosferiche nella loro forma più violenta.[9] Non escluderei, anzi, che pro-

prio la dimensione ''pluvia'' di *Sango* abbia contribuito all'identifi-
cazione;[10] il versamento d'acqua che il Battista opera sul capo di
Gesù, infatti, interpretato a livello cosmico/meteorologico, può ben
essere inteso come pioggia.[11]

Nello stesso torno d'anni in cui lo Herskovits raccoglieva le tradi-
zioni orali dei contadini negri di Haiti, un giovane antropologo di
origine messicana, Alfonso Villa Rojas, scopriva un mito, molto
simile a quello ora ricordato, fra i secessionisti maya dello Yucatán,
gli ultimi seguaci della Croce Parlante. Il Battista — con le parole
del Villa Rojas — ''celebra il giorno del suo nome con cicloni e
tempeste così violente che le giovani piante di mais possono essere
rovinate. Per evitare ciò, tuttavia, Dio fa dormire Juan Bautista in
quel giorno ed è còmpito di San Pedro svegliarlo più tardi ed evi-
tare che si arrabbi. Ecco perché, dice la gente, le temute piogge di
San Juan sono in realtà di solito così moderate''.[12] Lo Studioso,
avendo davanti agli occhi fenomeni sociali e religiosi ben più
importanti — e non conoscendo ciò che era stato scoperto ad Haiti
— poco si curava di storie di *Santos*, limitandosi a ironizzare sul
fatto che il Battista mostrasse scarso interesse ai problemi degli agri-
coltori, di contro a San Marco (25 aprile) e a San Isidoro (15 mag-
gio), che aprono la stagione delle piogge.[13] Incominciamo ad osser-
vare che, nel racconto yucateco come in quello haitiano, il Battista
è un'entità divina connessa non con il fuoco (per quanto il fumine
non sia escluso), ma con la pioggia, e, prima di tracciare un paral-
lelo fra le due situazioni, vediamo un terzo caso.

Circa trent'anni dopo le ricerche qui menzionate, tocca ad un
antropologo francese, Alain Ichon — che conosce la novella hai-
tiana, ma non quella yucateca — studiare alcuni villaggi di lingua
totonaca, sulle montagne della Sierra Madre Orientale prospicienti
l'Atlantico, e lì scoprire e analizzare un vero e proprio ''ciclo'' di
San Giovanni Battista, in un complesso mitico e religioso ricco di
elementi cristiani, aztechi e maya.[14] Le analogie di una parte di
questo ciclo con i racconti appena esaminati sono così forti che pos-
siamo parlare, per questa loro ampia diffusione, di un ''triangolo''
caraibico, con i vertici in Haiti, Yucatán e Totonacapán.

Un primo gruppo di miti cosmogonici totonachi[15] ruota attorno
ad un personaggio infantile perseguitato; ora appare come il ''Gio-
vane Sole'', ora come il ''Giovane Signore del Mais'', ora come

"Gesù Bambino''. La struttura dei tre racconti, ricostruiti dall'Ichon, ha notevoli punti di contatto e, anche se il ''Giovane Sole'' è di solito chiamato *Francisco*[16] e anche se solamente il ''Signore del Mais'', in una variante del mito, è detto *Trinità*,[17] le analogie sono tali che indicano una sostanziale identità fra i tre personaggi.[18] Nel corso delle avventure del ''Giovane Signore del Mais'' (quelle, fra l'altro, che hanno più analogie con il racconto locale relativo a ''Gesù Bambino''), fa la sua prima (per noi) comparsa un personaggio di nome *Juan*; egli è qui il turbine, che danneggia e sradica alberi e che viene così sgridato dal Giovane Mais/Gesù: ''Se farai lo stesso quando starò crescendo, mi ucciderai''.[19] Già questo rapido accenno permette un interessante parallelo con il racconto yucateco, a proposito di un particolare fondamentale nel mondo agricolo mesoamericano: la temuta distruzione delle giovani piante di mais. Una maggiore somiglianza, però, fra le narrazioni totonache e quelle yucateche è raggiunta in una parte del secondo degli ''episodi'' del ''ciclo'' di *San Juan*, quali riportati dall'Ichon; quello detto ''I Pitoni di Chicontepec''.[20]

Il mito narra che *San Juanito*, un ubriacone fortissimo la cui voce assorda e uccide (il tuono e il fulmine), su richiesta degli uomini frantuma una montagna-serpente (un vulcano della zona) e poi, ingannato, precipita in mare, sul cui fondo viene ''inchiodato mani e piedi''; qui non può far altro che urlare, e la sua voce è il ''mugghiare'' che si sente quando arrivano le piogge di giugno. Quando giunge la sua festa, vorrebbe essere avvertito, ma lo ingannano ancora, per timore che faccia ''diluviare'', e glielo dicono solo due o tre settimane dopo, così lui si limita ad una ''piccola festa'': ''allora incomincia a piovere e i ruscelli e i fiumi si gonfiano; poiché San Juanito, il Signore del Mare, comanda anche le nuvole e tutti i tuoni''.

Incontriamo così la fusione del racconto già visto ad Haiti e in Yucatán con la mitologia dei Totonachi. Per essi, infatti, Giovanni Battista, detto *Aktsinì*, ''Colui che fa tremare'',[21] è il succedaneo di *Tlaloc/Chac*, dio della pioggia, del fulmine, dell'acqua, ed è una delle entità divine principali del pantheon indigeno.[22]

Parzialmente simile in questo al grande dio maya *Chac*, che era uno, ma contemporaneamente quadruplice, essendovi un *Chac* per ogni direzione della terra,[23] *San Juan* è anche il principale dei quat-

tro ''Tuoni'' che, stando ai punti intercardinali, reggono il mondo
e mandano la pioggia.[24]

Il mito, allora, mostra per un verso una interessante connessione
culturale del mondo totonaco con l'area maya[25] e per l'altro pro-
pone lo stesso raccontino sul Battista, qui ampliato rispetto agli altri
due casi,[26] ma in cui il Santo ancora si presenta come signore
dell'acqua, senza rapporto alcuno con i fuochi (europei) della sua
festa. Questa, in tutti e tre i racconti, è sì importante, ma per le sue
caratteristiche cronometeorologiche, non astronomiche (solstiziali);
è situata infatti in una fase iniziale della stagione delle piogge,
quando il mais cresce e ha bisogno d'acqua ogni giorno, ma teme
le tempeste come la siccità.

Le ragioni, dunque, per l'identificazione di Giovanni Battista
con una divinità dell'acqua e, in particolare, della pioggia, sono
fondamentalmente due: l'atto attribuitogli, di versare acqua sulla
testa di Gesù (mais, sole), e la data della sua festa. Scattata l'identi-
ficazione, ciascun gruppo etnico ha apportato gli elementi mitici
che gli erano propri (quali la sua scomoda dimora in fondo al mare
oppure la connessione con gli dei-colonne che reggono il mondo),
fondendoli con elementi europei, di origine non sempre colta, ma
provenienti da quella che oggi chiameremmo religiosità popolare.[27]

2) Giovanni Battista e l'acqua; un santo per due fiumi

I tre casi sin qui esaminati, che forniscono gli esempi forse
migliori di un culto caraibico e mesoamericano dedicato a Giovanni
Battista in quanto dio della pioggia, provengono da villaggi in cui
il Santo cristiano *non* è il santo patrono[28] ed anzi il racconto yuca-
teco è originario di un villaggio in cui il culto della Croce Parlante
ha posto in secondo piano quello degli altri *Santos*.[29] Ora è noto che
il culto mesoamericano dei vari santi patroni comporta normal-
mente, oltre all'umanizzazione comune a tutti i *Santos*,[30] una
''distorsione teologica'' per cui ciascun patrono tende ad assumere,
agli occhi dei propri fedeli, le caratteristiche delle divinità cristiane
maggiori, anche con accostamenti arditi e con risultati talora stupe-
facenti.[31] Dal punto di vista rituale, inoltre, si verifica più volte
l'equivalente della rivoluzione teologica ora ricordata: si ha, cioè,
un accentramento di cerimonie, storicamente originatesi in altre

festività (come Pasqua o Carnevale), in quella che tende a diventare la *fiesta* principale nell'anno liturgico di ciascun pueblo. Anche il culto del Battista come santo patrono, nei pueblos indiani di Messico e Guatemala, segue nel complesso queste linee generali; sarà, però, interessante verificare se i meccanismi etnoreligiosi che hanno portato all'identificazione con il dio della dimensione acquea o con uno dei pilastri che reggono il mondo abbiano influenzato la figura del Battista anche come santo patrono, al di fuori delle aree sin qui analizzate.

In quanto caso degno di essere paradigmatico, riporto quello degli Indiani Mayo e Yaqui, due tribù confinanti che vivono in vari pueblos lungo due fiumi loro omonimi, nello Stato di Sonora, nel Messico nordoccidentale (sul versante del Pacifico).[32] La situazione del Battista è assai particolare: sorta di santo ''tribale'' per i Mayo,[33] è santo patrono di un pueblo mayo (Pueblo Viejo / Navojoa)[34] e sta diventando il santo più importante in un secondo pueblo mayo (Bánari),[35] mentre in un villaggio yaqui (Vicam) ha scalzato il santo protettore (*Natividad*), diventando *de facto* il patrono.[36] La sua importanza all'interno del mondo religioso delle due tribù appare dall'ampiezza e dal numero delle sue *fiestas*;[37] esse, a Pueblo Viejo — Navojoa, all'inizio degli anni '30 erano quattro e scandivano l'intero anno liturgico del villaggio.[38] La principale era ed è il *Pasko* del 24 giugno. Abbiamo la descrizione di tre di tali *fiestas*: quella di Vicam (yaqui), quella di Navojoa (mayo) e quella di Bánari (mayo). Dal confronto emergono tre elementi strutturali comuni: in tutti e tre i villaggi incontriamo a) danze di Mori e Cristiani, b) battaglie a colpi di gallo, c) ''battesimi'' e lavacri, in uso o di cui si ha il ricordo.

Ciascuna componente ha la sua storia. Le danze di Mori e Cristiani, variamente chiamate, sono diffuse in tutta l'America Latina; eredi delle sacre rappresentazioni importate dai colonizzatori cattolici, sono ora, in area mesoamericana, in genere il risultato di una fusione degli elementi più spettacolari delle cerimonie della Settimana Santa[39] con quelli del Carnevale europeo e di tutte le ''danze politico-religiose'' introdotte dagli Spagnoli: la danza della *Reconquista*, della *Conquista* (di Messico o di Guatemala, a seconda delle regioni)[40] e, talora, della presa di Gerusalemme. Una particolarità nei tre pueblos è che queste danze immancabilmente terminano con

uno scontro (tra gruppi di figuranti, ma che poi coinvolge il pub-
blico presente) che comporta la più o meno marcata deformazione
di uno spettacolo derivato dal Carnevale spagnolo: il "tiragallo".

Era (e forse è ancora) abitudine carnevalesca in alcuni villaggi
spagnoli di appendere per le zampe ad una fune tesa attraverso una
via (oppure di seppellirli nella sabbia in modo da lasciare spuntare
solo la testa) alcuni sventurati pennuti; il "gioco" era poi condotto
da concorrenti a cavallo che cercavano di staccare la testa e vincere
il gallo.[41] La scena è riprodotta piuttosto fedelmente almeno a
Vicam, dove il 24 giugno alcuni galli, con denaro legato alle
zampe, sono sepolti fino al collo e alcuni cacciatori a cavallo cer-
cano di "sterrarli", ostacolati da altri partecipanti.[42] In tutti e tre
i pueblos, certi galli — e a Vicam sono gli stessi —, afferrati per
il collo, sono adoperati come armi nelle battaglie fra Mori e soldati;
a Vicam, anzi, per maggior divertimento, ad un certo punto sono
spaccati in due e, dopo gli uomini, anche le donne partecipano alla
battaglia.[43] La dimensione ridicola, allora, sembra essere ottenuta
in due modi: "laicizzando" il "tiragallo" degli Spagnoli (ciò che
conta non sono i galli, che finiscono a brandelli e non in pentola,
ma il denaro attaccato alle zampe) e riducendo la spagnolissima
lotta *dei* galli ad una farsesca lotta *coi* galli. Un tale stravolgimento
di istituzioni spagnole sembra essere una delle caratteristiche del
Carnevale mesoamericano.[44]

Vi è, però, anche un aspetto più sacro nella connessione del Bat-
tista con i galli in Mesoamerica: a Bánari, la sera della vigilia (23
giugno), due galli sono legati a colonne della chiesa, così che "can-
tino all'alba"; durante la festa sono portati in processione, "battez-
zati" e ricondotti in chiesa.[45] Inoltre, a San Juan Hermita, un pue-
blo maya di Guatemala, la cui festa patronale è il 30 luglio,[46] i
Ladinos (non gli Indiani) eseguono un "tiragallo" in onore del Bat-
tista il 24 giugno (cioè per la Natività del Battista, che *non* è la festa
patronale).[47] Da un lato, dunque, sembra esservi un rapporto più
sacro (da culto solare; forse solstiziale!) dei galli con la festa del Bat-
tista, dall'altro sembra che una connessione della festa con il "tira-
gallo" sia già (o anche?) presente in ambiente spagnolo. Non
riesco, però, a trovare una spiegazione logica per cui un gruppo di
Ladinos abbia deciso di spostare il "tiragallo" da Carnevale al 24
giugno, in un pueblo guatemalteco in cui la festa patronale è il 30

luglio. Forse soltano uno studio del folklore spagnolo può dare una risposta.

Nelle feste mayo-yaqui, l'aspetto più legato alla figura del Battista è indubbiamente il terzo dei tre ricordati, quello delle immersioni ''battesimali'' nel fiume, durante una apposita processione che talora comporta il lavacro della statua.[48] Esso è molto diffuso nel folclore del Vecchio Mondo e non vi sono dubbi circa la sua origine precristiana europea.[49] Pare strano, però, che siano stati i Gesuiti, responsabili della prima cristianizzazione della zona nel XVII secolo, a insegnare agli Indiani proprio quelle ''superstizioni'' che la Chiesa cattolica avrebbe voluto sradicare — o per lo meno contenere — in Europa.[50] Essendo il culto del Battista in tutta l'area senz'altro antico,[51] dobbiamo ipotizzare che tali pratiche si siano sviluppate in periodi — che furono molti e lunghi — in cui la regione era sguarnita di preti, ma non di Spagnoli. Ancora una volta, non sembra essere il cristianesimo colto quello che trionfa tra gli Indiani, ma quello più popolare.

Un esempio concreto, infine, di come il culto del Battista possa svilupparsi e crescere, anche in tempi recenti, viene da Bánari. Poco più di cinquant'anni fa, durante un periodo di persecuzione governativa antireligiosa (e ancora, dunque, in assenza di preti), a Bánari un certo Señor Rodriguez, dato fuoco alla chiesa, portò i *Santos* oltre il fiume, per bruciarli a proprio agio; giunti sulla riva, Giovanni Battista si tuffò nel fiume, riuscendo ad evitare sia una fucilata tiratagli dietro dal Rodriguez sia il ''martirio'' col fuoco che attendeva gli altri. Oggi il luogo è segnato con una croce in legno[52] ed è precisamente lì che, ogni anno, si svolgono i ''battesimi'' e le abluzioni per la festa di San Giovanni. La vendetta del Battista è lenta, ma implacabile; un figlio del Rodriguez era già affogato nel fiume quando il Crumrine studiò il villaggio, ma la gente pia attendeva di peggio.[53] Non c'è da meravigliarsi se a Bánari *San Juan* stia soppiantando il patrono, che è addirittura *Santísima Tinirán*, cioè la Trinità, tanto da essere talvolta messo (unico fragli altri *Santos*) sull'altar maggiore.[54]

Il racconto, evidentemente importante per la vita religiosa dei Mayo, permette due osservazioni. In primo luogo, se la politica antireligiosa in Messico, e i conseguenti roghi di *Santos*, ha causato numerosi ''aggiustamenti agiografici'',[55] questo è forse l'unico caso

in cui un *Santo* si salvi a nuoto! In secondo luogo, la sua vendetta
colpisce facendo affogare; ma gli affogati erano coloro che, dopo
morti, raggiungevano nel suo regno *Tlaloc*, il dio dell'acqua azteco,
e gli annegati sono ancora oggi i *peones* che *San Juanito* si procura
fra i Totonachi.[56] Ciò significa, allora, che per questi Indiani Mayo
il Battista è diventato la divinità del fiume, dal quale essi ricevono
vita, in quanto ne dipendono per la propria sussistenza, e dalle cui
piene furiose ricevevano morte, prima che un sistema di canali e di
argini ne rendesse più sicure le sponde. Non vi era forse altro santo
cattolico più adatto a soddisfare l'esigenza religiosa dei Mayo e dei
loro vicini Yaqui, le cui credenze si inquadrano perfettamente in un
più ampio schema in cui San Giovanni è il dio dell'acqua, e non
vi è altro *Santo* che più di *Juan* possa essere io diventare il loro santo
patrono, anche scavalcando figure gerarchicamente più importanti
nel ''pantheon'' cattolico.[57]

3) Giovanni Battista e la terra; fra i Maya dell'Altopiano

I Mayo di Sonora conoscono anche un altro *Juan*. ''Questi è un
nano grasso alto circa una yarda, nudo e senza cappello, che spara
ai serpenti (d'acqua) con il fucile''. Quando si sente tuonare, sono
i suoi spari e i serpenti che lui ammazza sono quelli che stanno
nell'acqua dentro le grotte e aggrediscono chi va a bere.[58] Per
quanto gli informanti assicurassero il Beals che questo *Juan* non era
San Juan e per quanto certamente il Battista non sia connesso con
tutti i *Juanes* del folclore ispanoamericano,[59] questa figura è così
caratteristica che costituisce il ponte logico di passaggio all'oggetto
dell'ultima parte di questa ricerca: Giovanni Battista patrono dei
Chamula, Signore dell'Acqua, del Fulmine e della Terra.

Da quanto visto sin qui, non desterà stupore che nella vita reli-
giosa dei Chamula, Maya tzotzil dell'altopiano chiapaneco,[60] abbia
un'importanza particolare San Giovanni Battista, in quanto santo
patrono del municipio.[61] I Chamula, infatti, riconoscono sei *Santos*
principali, di cui tre ''maggiori'' e tre ''minori'', e il più impor-
tante dei ''maggiori'' è *San Juan*,[62] la cui festa è seconda, nel loro
calendario religioso, solo a quella del Carnevale.[63]

Attualmente, la festa patronale in Chamula non ha caratteristi-
che particolarmente ''giovannee'', tali che la distinguano dalle

altre, anche se nelle tradizioni orali è rimasto il ricordo di battesimi e abluzioni: "In passato, la gente celebrava la festa di *San Juan Bautista* presso una vasca d'acqua, così che potesse battezzare lì la gente … *San Juan* battezzava i frutti e le persone. Anche se oggi è in realtà il prete che esegue la cerimonia, lo fa nel nome di *San Juan*".[64] Data la dimensione mitica del racconto (presenza di *San Juan*), ci si può chiedere se esso davvero conservi una memoria storica o se non sia una proiezione di immagini evangeliche. Essendo il primo caso più probabile, data la presenza significativa di particolari non scritturistici (battesimo di frutti), avremmo una notevole analogia con le tradizioni dei Mayo e degli Yaqui, la cui lontananza culturale e geografica dai Chamula impedisce ogni ipotesi di contatto diretto e fa invece ipotizzare una comune dipendenza da influssi di origine europea.[65]

Fermo restando che la manifestazione più caratteristica della religiosità chamulteca è una sorta di culto solare, in cui il sole, detto "Padre Nostro", è identificato per lo più con *Jesucristo* e talora con "il Padre di Cristo",[66] possiamo cercare di capire che cosa significhi il Battista in tale complesso religioso, analizzando le tradizioni orali conservatesi nel pueblo.

San Juan Bautista è in primo luogo un eroe culturale. In Chamula si narra che *San Juan* fu il primo "uomo" ad abitare sulla terra, "prima che nascesse Gesù Cristo";[67] egli avrebbe "creato" i Chamula, trasformando in esseri umani le pietre bianche della valle,[68] così che ben a ragione essi possono dirsi suoi "figli".[69] Secondo alcune tradizioni, anzi, creati gli uomini, cioè i Chamula, egli avrebbe compiuto un atto che di solito in area mesoamericana — ed anche in alcuni racconti chamultechi — è realizzato da Gesù Cristo: *San Juan* diede il mais ai Chamula e insegnò loro a coltivarlo.[70] Questo fa parte di una serie di "atti primordiali" grazie ai quali il Battista, in quanto santo patrono, assume attributi cristologici o divini. Come "Nostro Padre", quando vide che la terra era "coperta da un lago", chiese l'intervento degli dèi della terra, affinché "il lago" divenisse "più piccolo",[71] così *San Juan*, arrivato a Chamula e trovata la valle parzialmente occupata da "un lago", lo riempie in gran parte, facendo "crollare una montagna" o "venir giù una collina".[72]

In quanto al liquore, sembra convinzione dei Chamula che il *trago* (il rum) sia un dono di "Nostro Padre";[73] *San Juan* avrebbe inventato la *chicha*, sorta di birra di mais e canna, dolce e popolare. Ubriacatosi con Nostro Padre, che aveva portato il *trago*, in quella che fu la prima *fiesta* della storia, inventò anche il canto.[74]

San Juan è colui che introduce gli aspetti più positivi della rivoluzione culturale ispanica. Come l'antica dea della luna aveva donato il cotone e aveva insegnato a tessere,[75] così *San Juan* introduce le pecore e insegna a lavorare la lana.[76] E' quasi certo che la connessione del Battista con le pecore sia dovuta alla presenza dell'agnello nella sua iconografia tradizionale;[77] resta meno chiaro, invece, il rapporto che, con le pecore, lo lega a San Sebastiano. Da alcune invocazioni, raccolte negli anni '40, risulterebbe che *San Juan* è il pastore delle pecore che appartengono a San Sebastiano, vero patrono degli ovini, anche se l'erba, il sale e i nastri apotropaici per gli agnellini sono resi sacri dal contatto con la statua di *San Juan*.[78] Ora, invece, da numerose testimonianze recenti, risulta che *San Juan* è il padrone delle pecore, di cui dispone a piacere, mentre *San Sebastián*, suo fratello minore, ne è talvolta il pastore.[79] E' probabile che, a parte un possibile *qui pro quo* del Pozas, lo "slittamento" di Sebastiano sia legato alla storia dei tre *barrios* di Chamula e sia connesso con il progressivo e irreversibile sfaldarsi del *barrio San Sebastián*, che risulta in via di assorbimento ad opera del *barrio San Pedro*, restando *barrio San Juan* il *barrio* dominante.[80]

L'atto civilizzatore definitivo di *San Juan* è, però, la costruzione della propria casa, la chiesa. Ogni chiesa, di ciascun pueblo della zona, è ritenuta essere l'abitazione del *Santo* patrono, che questi si costruì in epoca remota, ma ciascun pueblo ha la propria versione e ogni racconto differisce dagli altri. La saga di *San Juan* in Chamula ripropone alcuni luoghi comuni: il santo dà ordini alle pietre e queste si dispongono da sole, anche se alcune sono riluttanti. In uno dei racconti, anzi, si dice che "Nostro Padre" voleva aiutare *San Juan*, ma che le pietre non gli obbedivano; solo a *San Juan* obbedirono "volentieri".[81] Un'altra versione del racconto presenta un particolare assolutamente insolito: *San Juan*, dopo aver insegnato ai Chamula a costruirgli la casa (si ricordi l'analogia pietre/Chamula), "venne *dal bordo del cielo* a vivere come un dio".[82] La menzione del "bordo del cielo", ricorda la saga zinacanteca relativa alla

costruzione della chiesa di San Sebastiano: pur fra molte varianti,[83] tale costruzione è immancabilmente attribuita ai *Vašakmen*. E' questa un'entità divina antica e misteriosa, singolare e plurale ad uno stesso tempo, creatrice e sotterranea. Il loro numero non è preciso, ma dovrebbero essere quattro, poiché *stanno ai quattro angoli del mondo*, dove reggono la terra sulla loro schiena, con l'aspetto di colonne o di serpenti: il terremoto avviene quando cambiano spalla.[84] Poiché *San Juan* compie in Chamula almeno uno degli atti che nel confinante Zinacantán sono opera dei *Vašakmen*, l'accenno al *bordo del cielo* può forse essere indizio della presenza fra i Maya chiapanechi di un qualche mito paragonabile a quello da noi analizzato per i Totonachi? Questo interrogativo ci introduce in una delle dimensioni più caratteristiche del culto di *San Juan* in Chamula: l'assunzione da parte del santo di peculiarità appartenenti alle divinità della natura.

E' già stato osservato da alcuni Studiosi che il Battista in Chamula assume aspetti decisamente solari, divenendo in qualche modo un'altra manifestazione del sole,[85] ma anche le connessioni con la pioggia e con il mondo sotterraneo sono molto forti. Certamente, *San Juan* di Chamula non è l'unico *Santo* che si possa invocare perché piova,[86] poiché a ciò può servire ogni santo patrono; il suo rapporto con la pioggia, però è diverso. Negli altri casi, di solito il santo intercede presso Dio (Gesù Cristo) affinché ordini alle divinità della pioggia che facciano piovere;[87] qui, invece, abbiamo una ''pioggia di San Juan'', ritenuta ''calda'' dai Chamula, cioè maschile, fecondante, in qualche modo solare, tanto da essere simbolicamente rappresentata fra gli uomini da un intruglio di mais, che viene bevuto caldo nelle cerimonie.[88] Ciononostante i Chamula, come gli altri Tzotzil della zona, hanno una divinità del fulmine e della pioggia, chiamata *ʾAnhel*[89] e identificata con il ''Signore della Terra''. Anch'egli unico e molteplice, è un *ladino* ricco, che vive nelle grotte e, oltre a maneggiare il fulmine e il tuono, alleva serpenti (ed è egli stesso un serpente), ha grandi quantità di armi e di denaro, che può distribuire a chi riesca a convincerlo.[90] Ora, non solo in molte preghiere il Battista è definto ''ladino'' (tutti i *Santos* cattolici possono esserlo), ma è detto abitare in una grotta, sulla sua montagna sacra,[91] la montagna della pioggia, con la quale, anzi, pare identificarsi in almeno un racconto.[92] Secondo un

altro racconto, il ''fratello minore di San Juan'' era un soldato che
viveva in una grotta con la sua banda di armati ed era un ''dio della
terra''.[93] Infine si racconta la storia di un pover'uomo che final-
mente riesce a parlare, in una grotta, con un ''ladino'', ''dio della
terra'', che gli dona una vecchia zappa (forse il bastone con punta
metallica per lavorare il campo di mais); riposta in una cassa, la
zappa diviene un serpente e produce monete.[94] A parte le analogie
di struttura e di particolari con un racconto dell'incontro con il Bat-
tista,[95] mi hanno impressionato quelle con una narrazione di una
delle sciagurate campagne militari dei Chamula, quella del 1911
che, dal soprannome del comandante indiano, è detta ''guerra di
Pajarito''. Nella realtà, il vescovo di San Cristobal convinse gli
Indiani che le truppe messicane (porfiriste) sarebbero venute a bru-
ciare i *Santos*; i Chamula si armarono (o, meglio, furono armati dai
Ladinos conservatori di San Cristobal) e marciarono sulla capitale
dello stato, Tuxtla. Nel racconto popolare, invece, i Chamula vole-
vano recuperare il ''bastone di San Juan'', rubato loro dai *Ladinos*
di Tuxtla; questo bastone era la ''madre dei soldi'' e visto che, data
l'inevitabile sconfitta dei Chamula, esso sarebbe rimasto a Tuxtla,
''ancora oggi continua a dare ai Ladinos un gran benessere, mentre
gli Indiani restano poveri come sempre''.[96]

Allora, pur non essendovi fra i Chamula una organizzazione mi-
tica come quella che abbiamo visto fra i Totonachi (ove *San Juan*
partecipa di attributi celesti, terreni e sotterranei), anche sulle mon-
gagne di Chiapas il Battista si presenta come una divinità in grado
di assorbire qualità celesti (solari e pluvie) e altre in vari modi con-
nesse con il mondo cavernoso degli dei della pioggia e della terra
e con quello, ancora più profondo, delle misteriose divinità primi-
genie che, nella tenebra illuminata dal sole notturno, sorreggono la
terra. Ritengo che tale esito sia stato reso possibile dall'identifica-
zione dell'attività battistica di *San Juan* con l'attività pluvia degli dei
mesoamericani addetti alla pioggia. Avendo tali divinità molteplici
aspetti cosmico-meteorologici, il loro successore, il Battista, li ha
assorbiti, in quantità ed estensione variabili a seconda delle tribù,
ma lungo linee generali di sviluppo cultuale, i cui parallelismi credo
di avere dimostrato.

Conclusioni

La presente ricerca aveva come scopo quello di individuare le linee tendenziali di sviluppo del culto di un santo cattolico in una zona del Nuovo Mondo caratterizzata da un netto e talora rigoglioso sincretismo fra Cristianesimo e religioni preispaniche. Per quanto parziale e limitata, poiché composta non da un'indagine a tappeto, ma da una serie di ''assaggi'' in aree culturali limitrofe, quasi tutte contenute in una più ampia unità etnogeografica (Mesoamerica), essa mi pare mostri come sia possibile adottare una metodologia diversa da quelle più spesso applicate negli studi della regione e, partendo dal materiale raccolto in lavori soprattutto etnografici, ormai abbondanti, superare le analisi dei singoli pueblos o gruppi tribali, per giungere a un'indagine che riguardi le figure del culto. Ciò mi sembra importante, poiché la storia delle figure cultuali è l'equivalente, nel mito, della storia delle idee. Come alcuni studi recenti hanno posto in evidenza,[97] il mito e la storia in Mesoamerica si compenetrano in modo talora inestricabile, anche nel presente; studiare le figure del mito, dunque, significa analizzare la storia. Quali figure, però, è più opportuno affrontare?

A mio avviso, studiare oggi il culto di quel che resta di una determinata divinità preispanica non porta in genere a grossi risultati. Anche lo scoprire con quanti santi possa essere stato identificato il sole non aiuta molto a comprendere la storia: è possibile che quasi tutte le figure del santorale cattolico, in un pueblo o nell'altro, finiscano con l'assumere aspetti solari. L'idea che se ne ricava è solo quella di un Cristianesimo impazzito o di un paganesimo immortale, appena ''verniciato'' o ''etichettato'' con elementi cristiani. Lo studio, invece, del culto di determinati santi, nello spazio (come ho parzialmente fatto) e nel tempo (come sarebbe auspicabile), permette di penetrare a fondo nei meccanismi di interazione ispano-indiana che hanno generato una civiltà per molti aspetti tragica e anacronistica, ma ciononondimeno tra le più affascinanti del mondo contemporaneo.

Uno dei primi risultati di indagini di questo tipo è una conferma di quanto gli studi storici più recenti vanno affermando: se anche alcune strutture del mito sono precolimbine, gli elementi del rito

sono preponderantemente ispanici. Si pensi al caso spesso trascurato dei Tarahumara, une delle tribù meno ispanizzate e più ''pagane'' del Messico settentrionale; fra loro soltanto i *bautizados* hanno un mondo mitico molto sviluppato, espresso in una densa attività cultuale, con danze ricche di simboli comuni a quelle del resto di Mesoamerica. Nulla di paragonabile sussiste fra i *gentiles* superstiti (i quali, anzi, stanno progressivamente ''perdendo'' i propri dèi).[98] Mentre gli *Indios* ''pagani'' sono diversi, fra gli *Indios* ''cristiani'' si ritrovano gli elementi ''indiani'', simili a quelli definiti tali nel resto di Mesoamerica![99]

Certamente, il Cattolicesimo che si riscopre fra gli Indiani, anche se filtrato dai molti tentativi utopistici, da quello di Vasco de Quiroga a quello di Bartolomé de Las Casas a quelli dei Gesuiti sino al ''cattolicesimo evangelico'' dello Zumárraga,[100] è il Cattolicesimo contadino della Spagna rinascimentale. Il Gesù bambino, più o meno perseguitato, così presente nei miti mesoamericani, così attivo nel compiere miracoli, nell'allungare legne, nel plasmare uccellini di fango, nel fondare scuole, nell'uccidere i compagni di giochi, non se lo sono inventato gli Indiani. Se poi crediamo al Libro del *Chilám Balám di Chumayel*, persino le dispute sulla stregoneria, così angosciosamente diffuse nei peublos ''più indiani'', ''più isolati'', ''meno ladinizzati'', arrivarono con gli Spagnoli.[101] Il fatto, poi, che gli Indiani non fossero soggetti al controllo del Tribunale dell'Inquisizione, ma all'autorità vescovile, in genere più disposta a lasciar correre,[102] e, soprattutto, che dipendessero da padroni bianchi interessati al loro sfruttamento e non certo al loro progresso etico o intellettuale, ha permesso che un Cristianesimo, già sincretizzato con l'antico Paganesimo europeo e, talora, specie nei primi anni, proposto agli Indiani in modo molto approssimativo e leggendario dai soldati spagnoli divenuti i nuovi signori, continuasse a svilupparsi per successivi gradi di sincretizzazione.

Arriviamo così a trovare i riti precristiani ed europei di *Halloween*, ritenuti cristani dai Totonachi e da loro praticati come cristiani, in una ''festa dei morti'' impregnata di spiritualità mesoamericana preispanica.[103] Il 25 luglio, i Maya dello Yucatán correvano a piedi nudi sul fuoco per purificarsi prima di iniziare il nuovo anno, mentre i loro contemporanei Spagnoli, soprattutto Castigliani, correvano a piedi nudi sul fuoco il 24 giugno, per la

festa di San Giovanni Battista; gli odierni Chamula fanno una corsa sul fuoco, a piedi calzati, l'ultimo giorno di Carnevale. Poiché non tutti corrono, ma i danzatori-scimmie che rappresentano tenebre e *Ladinos*, forse la corsa dei Chamula è un qualcosa di completamente nuovo e diverso, forse rappresenta una speranza violenta, forse realizza nel simbolo ciò che i battaglieri Chamula hanno più volte tentato di realizzare in oltre quattro secoli di sopraffazioni e di sangue: la scomparsa nel fuoco della razza padrona, etnìa tenebrosa e nemica.

Ecco perché, allora, ogni *fiesta* in Mesoamerica tende a diventare un Carnevale e una Pasqua. Un Carnevale, poiché — come nel Carnevale europeo — i detentori del potere possono essere messi alla berlina, e una Pasqua, poiché nella Pasqua si assiste al temporaneo trionfo della "tenebra giudaica" su Cristo-Sole, il quale, però, risorgendo, incenerisce i suoi avversari. Ma quelli che cosmicamente sono le tenebre e per la storia "cristiana" sono "i Giudei", per gli Indiani sono i *Ladinos*, in tutte le loro successive manifestazioni storiche. E il sole, che muore ad ogni eclisse e che scompare ogni notte, per rinascere sfolgorante ogni volta, è il Cristo, che viene ucciso ad ogni Passione e risorge ad ogni Pasqua, mentre un fantoccio chiamato "Giuda" o "Giudeo" brucia fra il pubblico in festa.[104] Il Cristo, però, sono gli Indiani. Non so se si possa parlare davvero di una teologia indiana, ma di una cristologia sì; ed è una cristologia etnocentica e rivoluzionaria.

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¹ M. J. Herskovits, *Life in a Haitian Valley*, New York 1937, p. 281; Id., "African Gods and Catholic Saints in New World Negro Belief", in *American Anthropologist*, 39 (1937), p. 639.

² Così per gli Yoruba. *Šango* (*Changó*, *Xangô*) corrisponde al *Vodun* del Dahomey *Sobo* o *Sogbo*; cfr. R. Bastide, *Les Amériques Noires. Les Civilisations Africaines dans le Nouveau Monde*, Paris 1967, p. 163; Id., *O Candomblé da Bahia* (*Rito Nagô*) (Brasiliana, 313), Sâo Paulo 1961, p. 264.

³ Bastide, *Candomblé*, p. 240.

⁴ A, Métraux, *Le Vaudou Haïtien*, Paris 1958, p. 290 (ove *Sobgo* è refuso di *Sogbo*).

⁵ R. Bastide, "Le Batuque de Pôrto-Alegre", in S. Tax (ed.), *Selected Papers of the XXIXth congress of Americanists*, Chicago 1952, II, pp. 195-206. Il testo non mi è accessibile; ricavo il contenuto da Bastide, *Amériques*, p. 162 e Id., *Candomblé*, p. 326. Il sonno del Santo nel dì della sua festa è comunque presente nel folklore siciliano: V. Lanternari, "Cristianesimo e religioni etniche in Occidente. Un caso concreto d'incontro: la festa di San Giovanni", in *Società*, 1 (1955), ora Cap. X di Id., *Occidente e Terzo Mondo*, Bari 1972 (da cui cito), p. 517, n. 65.

⁶ L. de Câmara Cascudo, *Dictonário do Folklore Brasileiro*, Rio de Janeiro 1962, p. 392.

⁷ Bastide, *Candomblé*, p. 195, n. 102.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 126.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 240, con la descrizione cosmico-meteorologica dell'amplesso di *Šango* con *Oxun*, "la regina", la preferita delle sue tre mogli.

¹⁰ La connessione del Battista con la pioggia pare piuttosto problematica nel folklore europeo. Il Lanternari, *cit.*, p. 341, ricordando la pratica divinatoria consistente nell'esporre chicchi di grano alla guazza della notte di San Giovanni (23-24 giugno) per derivarne auspici, a seconda dell'umidità, sull'abbondanza del raccolto, dice: "La rugiada della notte nella quale l'anno intero si prefigura idealmente, sintetizza le fertilizzanti piogge dell'annata e, con ciò, il raccolto più o meno buono". Ciò pare strano a fine giugno, quando le messi son quasi mature e la pioggia sarebbe dannosa (a meno che non sia grano appena mietuto e l'auspicio riguardi l'anno seguente). Forse l'umidità notturna fa appesantire i chicchi e da ciò deriva il vaticinio. Lo Herskovits, *African Gods*, p. 639, ritiene che l'elemento comune a *Šango* e a Giovanni Battista sia dato dall'agnello con cui è rappresentato costantemente San Giovannino (*sic*), essendo il montone "simbolo" del dio africano ed animale che ad Haiti è sacrificato a *Loa St. Jean Baptiste* (la stesso A., però, in *Life*, p. 282, racconta che San Giovanni fa scaturire una fonte sacra, in cui ci si immerge e la cui acqua si può bere, ma non usare per cucinare, in uno dei tre luoghi santi presso Saut d'Eau). Il Bastide, *Amériques*, p. 162, n. 4, amplia il discorso: a causa del fulmine, *Šango* è identificato a Cuba con Santa Barbara; a causa del montone è identificato in Brasile con San Girolamo (al cui fianco, secondo il Bastide, nell'iconografia tradizionale cattolica comparirebbe sempre un ovino — a me consta che di solito, accanto a San Girolamo, sia raffigurato un *leone*, ammansito sì come un agnello, ma pur sempre leone); a causa del fuoco diviene in Haiti il Battista (pensa ai fuochi di San Giovanni). La connessione con l'acqua è vista da F. Ortiz Fernandez (*Hampa Afro-Cubana. Los Negros Brujos. Apuntes para un estudio de Etnología Criminal*, Madrid s.d. (post 1917), p. 63), quando nota come a Cuba il Battista sia *Ololú*, da lui spiegato come l'*oriša Olokún*, dio yoruba del mare, accostato al Santo cattolico poiché questi è spesso rappresentato nel Giordano (lo Herskovits, *African Gods*, p. 642, ritiene che *Ololú* sia *Omolú*; questi, però, è il dio del vaiolo, identificato spesso con San Sebastiano — o San Rocco, per ovvî motivi: Bastide, *Amériques*, pp. 161ss — essendo frecce e ferite simbolo

delle piaghe della sua malattia, sfruttando un modello simbolico già europeo medioevale, diffuso specialmente fra le classi più povere: J. N. Biraben, "Les pauvres et la peste", in *Études sur l'histoire de la pauvreté* (*Moyen Âge - XVI siècle*) t. II, Paris 1974, p. 509; Id., *Les hommes et la peste en France et dans les pays européens et méditerranéens*, t. II: *Les hommes face à la peste*, Paris 1976, pp. 76-82. Per quanto concerne *Šango*, secondo lo Ortiz esso è identificato, a Cuba, con Santa Barbara poiché questa è rappresentata con una spada in mano e *Šango*, oltre che un dio, sarebbe stato anche un antico re-guerriero: *Hampa*, p. 57).

[11] Questa ipotesi si basa su due presupposti: a) che il personaggio battezzato dal Battista sia inteso come Cristo; b) che Cristo assuma aspetti di un dio celeste o di una divinità della vegetazione. Ora, nelle religioni afroamericane, in genere, Cristo è equiparato a un aspetto di *Obatalá* (*Orišalá, Oxalá*), "demiurgo" androgino, creatore dei corpi, energia produttiva della natura, entità la cui manifestazione è spesso la volta celeste (Herskovits, *African Gods*, p. 641; Bastide, *Amériques*, pp. 125.163: Id., *Candomblé*, p. 198; Ortiz, *cit.*, pp. 52ss). L'associazione è dunque possibile.

[12] A. Villa Rojas, *The Maya of East Central Quintana Roo* (CIWP, 559), Washington 1945, p. 100. La letteratura sulla Croce Parlante e sulla connessa "Guerra delle Caste" in Yucatán è ampia: dati recenti sul culto in V. Bricker R., *The Indian Christ, the Indian King. The Historical Substrate of Maya Myth and Ritual*, Austin 1981, pp. 368; per la sua crisi, Ch. Zimmermann, "The Hermeneutics of the Maya Cult of the Holy Cross", in *Numen*, 12 (1965), pp. 139-159. Il lavoro più ampio è sempre N. Reed, *The Caste War of Yucatan*, Stanford 1964, pp. 308.

[13] *Loc. cit.* Si noti che, essendo il culto della Croce iniziato intorno al 1850, queste storie di santi, anche se più "cattoliche", riflettono la situazione anteriore.

[14] A. Ichon, *La Religion des Totonaques de la Sierra* (Études et Documents de l'Institut d'Ethnologie de l'Université de Paris), Paris 1969, pp. 424.

[15] Ichon, *cit.*, pp. 54-88.

[16] *Ibid.*, p. 59. In altri contesti è identificato con Cristo e riceve altri nomi, Domenico e Lazzaro (pp. 144s). L'A. ipotizza che Lazzaro sia identificato con il sole grazie al racconto della sua resurrezione (p. 92). Esso è però anche il nome della luna (pp. 59. 145) — che per i Totonachi è maschio (cfr. I. Kelly, "The Modern Totonac", in *Revista Mexicana de Estudios Antropológicos*, 13 (1952), p. 186) — e forse ci troviamo di fronte ai resti di una interpretazione del mito mesoamericano (*Popol Vuh*) dei due fratelli, con Lazzaro considerato "fratello" di Gesù (una riprova verrebbe dal nome con cui è più comunemente chiamato il dio-luna, *Manoel*, cioè Emanuele, cioè un altro nome di Gesù Cristo; è ben noto che in area mesoamericana i *Santos* che hanno lo stesso nome o che, agli occhi degli "ortodossi", rappresentano lo stesso personaggio, sono ritenuti "fratelli" dagli Indiani). In quanto a *Francisco* e *Domingo*, pare debole la connessione con l'attività missionaria di Francescani e Domenicani, poiché la zona studiata era controllata dagli Agostiniani sin dal 1533 ed è anzi certo che i Domenicani (come i Gesuiti) non vi posero praticamente piede (I. Kelly — A. Palerm, *The Tajin Totonac*. Part 1: *History, Subsistence, Shelter and Technology* (Smithsonian Institution — Institute for Social Anthropology — Publications, 13), Washington 1952, pp. 31s). E' invece possibile, poiché il Cristo dei Totonachi è un sole che sanguina e dal cui sangue nascono frutti (p. 58), che il racconto delle stimmate francescane abbia avuto una parte nell'identificare Cristo-sole con Francesco (n. 1, p. 145; debole mi sembra l'idea di una connessione dovuta al fatto che il mito pone il giovane dio in rapporto con un gran numero di uccelli: p. 92). Anche a Cuba *Orúmbila*, il "sole-che-nasce", è *San Francisco* (Ortiz, *cit.*, p. 62) e ad Amatenango, Chiapas, "Nostro

Padre San Francesco'' è una statua di Cristo (dell'Ascensione, quindi con un note-
vole aspetto solare: J. C. Nash, *The Change of Officials in Tzo͡ontal, Chiapas, Mexico.
An analysis of Behavior as a Key to Structure and Process* (MARI, 24), New Orleans
1966, p. 225). Per *Domingo*, più che con San Domenico, ipotizzerei una connes-
sione con la domenica, ''il giorno del Signore'', basandomi sul fatto che in tutta
l'area mesoamericana è salda l'idea che al nome del giorno corrisponda il nome
di un dio (cfr. *e. g.* J. E. S. Thompson, *Maya Hieroglyphic Writings. Introduction*
(CIWP, 589), Washington 1950, pp. 66-103).

[17] Ichon, *cit.*, pp. 74.80.

[18] *Ibid.*, p. 87.

[19] *Ibid.*, p. 70.

[20] *Ibid.*, pp. 112-117. Nel primo, *San Juanito*, eroe culturale, cacciatore, pigro
e ubriacone, si mostra Signore degli animali selvatici e iniziatore della coltivazione
dei tuberi (pp. 108-111). A mio avviso, l'Ichon considera ''variante'' secondaria
quella che dovrebbe essere la forma più arcaica del mito. Secondo questa, la
moglie di *San Juan*, con un urlo, fa fuggire nel bosco tutti gli animali che *San Juan*
aveva costruito e stava facendo lavorare per lui, nella semina del mais. Visto che
il lavoro deve comunque essere finito, la moglie allora fa dei buchi nel terreno e
vi sputa dentro; da ciò nascono i vari tuberi. Questo racconto contiene alcuni *topoi*
ampiamente diffusi nelle leggende mesoamericane e specialmente maya: animali
ottenuti magicamente fuggono nel bosco per causa di una donna (da *Hun Baatz*͐
e *Hun Choven* del *Popol Vuh* ai ''fratelli maggiori'' di Gesù Bambino nel folklore
contemporaneo) e, soprattutto, il fatto che i tuberi siano prodotto di un liquido
femminile (gocce di latte della Madonna in fuga, inseguita dai Giudei; *e.g.*: G.
Gossen, *Chamulas in the World of the Sun. Time and Space in a Maya Oral Tradition*,
Cambridge M. 1974, p. 343. L'Ichon, p. 109, oltre ai tuberi, parla anche di ''ver-
dure''; se l'allusione può fare riferimento a zucche o ad altri prodotti ''tuberi-
formi'' dell'orto, questi sono gocce d'urina della Vergine: C. Guiteras-Holmes,
Perils of the Soul. The World View of a Tzotzil Indian, Glencoe 1961, pp. 157.182).
L'intero racconto ha dei paralleli con la storia di ''La Figlia del Dio della Terra''
(Gossen, *cit.*, p. 267, che indica ampia letteratura in proposito), e permette di
vedere nella figura della moglie di *San Juan* riprodotti alcuni aspetti presenti in miti
connessi con *Xochiquetzal*, moglie di *Tlaloc* e una delle dee della vegetazione
(J. E. S. Thompson, *The Moon Goddess in Middle America. With Notes on Related Dei-
ties* (CAAH, V, 29 = CIWP, 509), Washington 1939, pp. 121-173, spec.
135.142.144).

[21] Ichon, *cit.*, p. 115.

[22] V. schema, *ibid.*, p. 91.

[23] F.   Anders,   *Das   Pantheon   der   Maya*,   Graz   1963,   pp.
85ss.132-142.269s.279-284.

[24] Ichon, *cit.*, pp. 28s.37s.70 e *passim*; gli altri tre sono San Gregorio, San
Gabriele e Sant'Alessandro. Direi che l'analogia con *Chac* sia tale da cancellare i
dubbi che lo stesso Ichon a più riprese avanza sull'identità fra il San Giovanni dio
dell'acqua e il San Giovanni Tuono che regge la terra.

[25] Connessione altrimenti nota e giustamente sottolineata a più riprese
dall'Ichon. E' possibile che la vicinanza con gli Huastechi, popolazione di origine
maya, abbia contribuito alla presenza di elementi non *méxica* nel mito; forse l'insi-
stenza sull'ubriachezza di *San Juan*, oltre che un elemento di folklore recente,
ovvero una eredità della figura del *Tlaloc* azteco, potrebbe essere un ricordo
dell'importanza dell'ubriachezza rituale per gli Huastechi, il cui dio dell'oceano
era anche il dio dell'ubriachezza: G. Stresser-Pean, ''Les Indiens Huastèques'',
in *Revista Mexicana de Estudios Antropológicos*, 13 (1952), pp. 230s.

[26] Esisterebbe un racconto totonaco "indipendente"(?), relativo al dio dell'acqua incatentato in fondo al mare (con i capelli della Vergine): Ichon, *cit.*, p. 115, n. 1 e p. 350, n. 1, con rinvio bibliografico confuso.

[27] In tal modo ritengo risolto il problema dell'origine di questo mito in Mesoamerica, per cui l'Ichon non esclude la paternità afrocaraibica o afrocristiana (p. 148, spec. n. 2), a mio avviso improbabile. Certo vi furono schiavi negri in Nuova Spagna (G. Aguirre Beltrán, *La población negra de México, 1515-1870. Estudio Etnohistórico*, México 1946, *passim*) e questi entrarono in contatto con la popolazione indiana (Bastide, *Amériques*, pp. 77-93), ma è difficile dimostrare una diretta influenza negra nell'interno dello Yucatán o sulla sierra Madre. Sono invece attestati casi opposti di indianizzazione di negri; E. A. Uchmany de De la Peña ("Cuatro casos de Idolatría en el Área Maya ante el Tribunal de la Inquisición", in *ECM*, 6 (1967), pp. 267-300) discute il caso dello schiavo negro Christobal che a Campeche (Yuc.) nel 1582 fu accusato di aver partecipato ai pasti sacri "pagani" degli Indiani.

[28] A Mirebalais il santo patrono è San Luigi, identificato con un *loa Wangol* (Herskovits, *Life*, p. 280) e fra i Totonachi il mito pare presente in tutti e cinque i pueblos studiati dall'Ichon, indipendentemente dal fatto che il Battista sia il patrono di uno di essi.

[29] Cfr. W. Madsen, "Religious Syncretism", in *HMAI* VI (1967), p. 387; ma la Zimmermann (*cit.*, p. 153, n. 37) sembra indicare, proprio con la storia di una statua miracolosa del Battista, una capacità di rivincita e di recupero in anni recenti del culto di *Santos* più antropomorfi, forse in coincidenza con una certa crisi nel culto della Croce.

[30] Al punto che i vari idoli hanno i difetti degli uomini ed hanno una loro vita sessuale; vari casi in W. Madsen, "Christo-Paganism. A Study of Mexican Religious Syncretism" (1957), in *Nativism and Syncretism* (MARI, 19), New Orleans 1960, pp. 149.155; J. E. Nash, *In the Eyes of the Ancestors. Belief and Behavior in a Maya Community*, New Haven 1970, pp. 43.327; R. Pozas Arciniega, *Chamula. Un Pueblo Indio de los Altos de Chiapas* (Memorias del INI, 8), México 1959, p. 15; P. Carrasco, "Tarascan Folk Religion. An Analysis of Economic, Social, and Religious Interactions" (1952), in *Synoptic Studies of Mexican Culture* (MARI, 17), New Orleans 1957, p. 54, cfr. p. 32.

[31] Fra i molti esempi possibili, ne presento uno che mi è parso significativo, in quanto tende a superare anche la dicotomia con il "dio supremo", talora osservabile quando il santo patrono è un'entità di sesso femminile (F. Cámara, "Religious and Political Organisation", in S. Tax (ed.), *Heritage of Conquest. The Ethnology of Middle America*, Glencoe 1952, p. 152). Ad Amatenango (pueblo maya) si raccontano varie leggende sull'origine del *trago*, il liquore il cui consumo è sacro nelle *fiestas* e in ogni momento religioso della vita degli Indiani. Secondo alcuni, il *trago* "apparve quando Gesù fu tolto dalla croce e il suo corpo fu lavato"; secondo altri, "Dio ci ha dato il trago solo lavandosi, solo con la sua potente urina"; secondo altri, infine, il *trago* deriva dall'acqua in cui si lavò Santa Lucia, una dei patroni di Amatenango, quando inventò la prima *fiesta* e nessuno sapeva come fare (Nash, *In the Eyes*, pp. 209s.189.220; cfr. pp. 325s, con l'inserimento di S. Lucia nel mito preispanico dell'invenzione del mais). Il problema è chiaro: è opinione di tutti gli Indiani che il liquore sia dono di dio, ma si deve decidere *chi è dio*. Così Santa Lucia, in quanto la più popolare dei santi patroni del pueblo (gli altri sono *Francisco, Pedro Martir* e *Sacramento*), giunge ad assumere caratteristiche che non le sono proprie; non ha infatti sul suo corpo ferite sanguinanti ed anzi la sua urina o il suo sangue fisiologico dovrebbero essere considerati dagli Indiani

oltremodo "freddi", e quindi con una natura opposta a quella del liquore (per l'uso del liquore fra gli Indiani, v. R. G. McCarthy (ed.), *Drinking and Intoxication. Selected Readings in Social Attitudes and Controls*, New Haven 1959, spec. R. Bunzel, "Chichicastenango and Chamula", pp. 73-86; D. Metzger, *Interpretations of Drinking Performances in Aguacatenango*, University of Chicago, Microfilm Thesis T 10465, Chicago 1964; M. Kearney, *The Winds of Ixtepeji. World View and Society in a Zapotec Town* (Case Studies in Cultural Anthropology), New York 1972, pp. 139. Per l'opposizione fra "caldo" e "freddo", v. Ch. Wisdom, "The Supernatural World and Curing", in Tax, *cit.*, pp. 129ss; Gossen, *cit.*, pp. 37ss). Mi pare buona ragione per l'esistenza di questo bagno miracoloso di Santa Lucia, l'idea che, in quanto patrona, essa "sia dio" e le sua figura sostituisca nel mito quella del Cristo sanguinante.

[32] Mi baso su: R. L. Beals, *The Contemporary Culture of the Cáhita Indians* (Smithsonian Institution — Bureau of American Ethnology — Bulletin, 142), Washington 1945, pp. 244 (con dati etnografici relativi agli anni '30); N. R. Crumrine, *The Mayo Indians of Sonora. A People who Refuses to Die*, Tucson 1977, pp. 167 (con dati soprattutto degli anni '60); E. H. Spicer, *The Yaquis. A Cultural History*, Tucson 1980, pp. 393 (con dati a partire dagli anni '40 sino alla fine degli anni '70).

[33] Beals, *cit.*, pp. 133ss; Crumrine, *cit.*, p. 72.

[34] *Ibid.*

[35] Crumrine, *cit.*, pp. 77ss.

[36] Beals, *cit.*, pp. 185ss. Lo Spicer, *cit.*, p. 188, ipotizza che in origine i *Santos* fossero due, uno della chiesa e l'altro del pueblo; l'uno (non essendo ben chiaro quale delle due fosse la sua funzione originaria) sarebbe "emerso", mettendo in ombra l'altro. Il fatto troverebbe un parallelo in un secondo pueblo yaqui, Rahum, ove *Corpus Christi* ha soppiantato *Asunción*.

[37] Per indicare una *fiesta*, i Mayo usano il termine *pasko* e gli Yaqui l'equivalente *pahko*, entrambi derivati dallo spagnolo *Pascua*. Con ciò gli Indiani non fanno altro che estendere la terminologia spagnola, che definisce *Pascua (florida)* la Pasqua di Resurrezione, *Pascua (granada)* la Pentecoste, *Pascua de Reyes* o *de Moros* l'Epifania e semplicemente *Pascua* il periodo fra Natale e l'Epifania. Fra i Maya Tzotzil, a Zinacantán, nel linguaggio rituale ogni *fiesta* è chiamata *pasqwa* e questo è il termine che normalmente indica il Natale (R. M. Laughlin, *The Great Tzotzil Dictionary of San Lorenzo Zinacantan* (Smithsonian Contribution to Anthropology, 19), Washington 1975, *s.v. Pasqwa*; cfr. *Me'tik Paskú*, il nome della Vergine festeggiata a Natale ad Amatenango: Nash, *cit.*, p. 208). In alcuni pueblos circonvicini i funzionari incaricati delle feste di Carnevale sono detti *pasiones*. L'equivalenza semantica e linguistica dei *pasiones* con i *paskome* dei Mayo scalza in buona parte le teorie troppo storicizzanti della Bricker (*cit.*, pp. 133ss.161s), che afferma: "Il ruolo di Pasion si trova solo nelle comunità che parteciparono alla guerra di Santa Rosa o in quelle che confinano con Chamula" (p. 161) e: "Il Pasion, che ora è venerato come dio incarnato, sembra essere il sostituto del ragazzo indiano crocifisso nel 1868" (*ibid.*) e infine asserisce che solo in Chamula vi è un interprete umano di Cristo nella Passione — negli altri pueblos essendo una statua — poiché in Chamula l'identificazione con Cristo è più forte che altrove (p. 162). Ad Atitlán, almeno fino al 1931, uno dei sei *mayordomos* era addirittura appeso alla croce "per impersonare Cristo nella Settimana Santa" e, come osserva il Beals, "ciò era fatto in segreto" (R. L. Beals, *Ethnology of the Western Mixe* (Library of Latin American History and Culture), New York 1983 (I ed. 1945), p. 79).

[38] Esso risulta, così, interamente strutturato in base alle feste dedicate al Battista. La prima, detta *Putí*, cioè "piccolo" o "inizio", cade un sabato "intorno al

26 luglio'' e segna l'inizio dell'anno liturgico, con la sostituzione degli incaricati annuali della celebrazione delle varie feste (i *paskome* o *fiesteros*; *cargueros* in altri pueblos; il Beals non lo dice, ma certo vuole sottolineare che la data — 26 luglio — coincide con l'inizio dell'anno secondo alcuni noti calendari preispanici e, in particolare, quello ricordato da Diego de Landa per lo Yucatán. A mio avviso potrebbe essere l'eredità della festa del 29 luglio, festa latina della *revelatio capitis S. Joannis Baptistae*: *Acta Sanctorum Julii*, t. VII, Venetiis 1749, p. 2; cfr. *Acta Sanctorum Junii*, t. IV, Venetiis 1743, pp. 756-761); la seconda, detta *Bahíto* o *Medio Camino*, segue *Putí* di 6/7 mesi (il Beals, *Contemporary Culture*, dà il 24 gennaio a p. 135 e il 28 febbraio a p. 139); la terza, *Hísimo* o *Grandísimo* o ''Festa della bandiera di *San Juan*'', nel 1931 avvenne l'11-12 gennaio (il Beals non se ne avvede, ma dovrebbe trattarsi della festa ''giovannea'' cattolica del Battesimo di Gesù, che cade la prima domenica dopo l'Epifania, cioè, nel 1931, appunto l'11 gennaio), quindi prima di *Medio Camino*, e infine *San Juan, Fiesta Grande*, sempre al 24 giugno e ''ultima'' festa dell'anno (Beals, *Ibid.*, pp. 133ss.208s).

[39] *Paskola* è il nome stesso della danza sacra a Bánari. In questo interessante villaggio, l'anno liturgico è diviso in due parti, una, da Pasqua a Natale, il periodo ''solare'', in cui la vita si svolge normalmente, e una, da Natale a Pasqua, periodo ''delle tenebre''. In esso, i *Pariserom* (Farisei), o *Hurasím* (i Giuda, o i Giudei), con i loro quattro *Pilatos*, perseguitano Gesù, sino a ''prendere il potere'' durante la Settimana Santa, uccidere Gesù, esautorare i funzionari ''normali'' (detti ''i Tre Re'') e gli altri danzatori sacri (i *Paskolam*), riempiendo il villaggio con le proprie azioni e parole scurrili, il volto coperto da ''maschere pelose''. Con la Resurrezione (di Sabato Santo), Gesù/''nuovo sole'' è detto ''bruciarli''; una triplice corsa fra l'altare e la croce dell'atrio di fronte alla chiesa conclude il periodo del loro potere e segna il ritorno alla normalità, sottolineata dal loro ''battesimo'' (Crumrine, *cit.*, pp. 59.85-99). E' questo l'esempio più lucido da me incontrato della drammatizzazione del contrasto cosmico-religioso fra Luce e Tenebre, quale, nel resto dell'area mesoamericana, è concentrato a Carnevale, o nel periodo che va da Carnevale a Pasqua. In particolare, l'analogia con il Carnevale di Chamula è molto forte e costituisce un punto a mio avviso di notevole sostegno alle tesi di Ochiai (K. Ochiai, ''Revuelta y Renacimiento: Una Lectura Cosmológica del Carnaval Tzotzil'', in *ECM*, 15 (1984), pp. 207-223), e quindi contro quelle della Bricker (*loc. cit.*).

[40] Fra i Totonachi studiati dall'Ichon, il giorno di San Giovanni — come anche in altre feste — danzano i *Santiagueros* in un'ampia cerimonia, in cui *Santiago* a cavallo, aiutato dal proprio figlio *Gallinche*, affronta e sconfigge i soldati romani agli ordini di Pilato (il diavolo) e dei suoi luogotenenti: *Ekcharión, Sevario, Herodes* e, talora, un quarto, dal nome indiano (*op. cit.*, pp. 341ss). Gallinche è ''il Malinche'', cioè Cortés (cfr. J. Danaher Chaison, ''Mysterious Malinche: A Case of Mistaken Identity'', in *The Americas*, 32 (1976), pp. 514s; l'Ichon insiste nel farne ''*la* Malinche'', per identificarla con una dea dell'acqua e avere nella danza un elemento preispanico), e mostra che probabilmente i Totonachi hanno avuto sotto gli occhi una famosa immagine di *Santiago* a cavallo, accompagnato da uno Spagnolo armato dalla testa ai piedi, che travolge i Mori avanzando verso Granada (cfr. Métraux, *cit.*, Pl. XV, 1 e Herskovits, *Life*, foto a fronte p. 192). Se è vero che *Ekcharión*, da *Alchareo* o *Archareo*, è Archelao, essendo *Sevario* (detto anche *Savario* o *Zabario*) Tiberio (e non Settimio Severo, che non c'entra), con Erode e Pilato abbiamo insieme, nell'esercito del male, quasi tutti i personaggi del potere ''romano'' citati nei vangeli (senza riferimenti alla *Relación de la destrucción de Jerusalén*; contro Ichon, *Ibid.*). Per l'origine della figura di *Santiago matamoros* nell'icono-

grafia spagnola (già medioevale), v. R. Plötz, "Imago Beati Jacobi. Beiträge zur
Ikonographie des Hl. Jacobus Maior im Hochmittelalter", in *Wallfahrt kennt keine
Grenze*, Zürich 1984, pp. 258s.

[41] S. Nieves de Hoyos, "Algunas notas sobre Carnavales en España", negli *Atti
del XXXVI Congr. Intern. degli Americanisti*, Sevilla 1966, II, pp. 417-422. Per
l'uso del "tiragallo" in Mesoamerica, v. O. La Farge — D. Byers, *The Year Bea-
rer's People* (MARI, 3), New Orleans 1931, pp. 95s.101 (Mercoledì delle Ceneri).

[42] Beals, *Contemporary culture*, p. 186.

[43] *Ibid.*; per Navojoa, p. 143 e per Bánari, Crumrine, *cit.*, p. 28.

[44] In genere, ogni Carnevale comporta appunto il capovolgimento delle norme
sociali o delle regole dettate dai gruppi al potere. Non stupisca che una tal quantità
di elementi carnevaleschi sia confluita in una festa patronale: a Bánari, ad ogni
fiesta, i *Santos* autorizzano esplicitamente per un periodo limitato l'ironia e l'osce-
nità rituali dei *Paskolam* (Crumrine, *cit.*, p. 26). In quanto al "tiragallo", pur non
essendo enormemente diffuso, esso è praticato persino nella festa patronale di
Todos Santos, un villaggio maya guatemalteco, festa che (Tutti i Santi), data la
connessione tradizionale con la ricorrenza dei Morti, non è delle più gioiose del
calendrio cattolico (M. Oakes, *The Two Crosses of Todos Santos. Survivals of Mayan
Religious Ritual* (Bollinger Series, 27), New York 1951, pp. 209-215; l'A. sottolinea
la dimensione religiosa che tale "cerimonia" ha assunto per gli Indiani del luogo).

[45] Crumrine, *cit.*, pp. 27s; l'A. non specifica se anche questi galli siano poi
usati nella battaglia.

[46] Ch. Wisdom, *The Chorti Indians of Guatemala* (The University of Chicago,
Publications in Anthropology — Ethnological Series), Chicago 1940, pp. 448s e
453). In quanto alla festività del 30 luglio, essa è vicina alla data che il Beals indica
per *Putí* a Pueblo Viejo e vale per essa quanto detto a n. 38. Il Wisdom, talora
impreciso quando si tratta di cose cattoliche (a p. 453 ritiene che il *Corpus Christi*
— cioè il *Corpusdomini* — sia una festa in onore del "body of Christ"), pensa che
lo stesso *San Juan* di Camotán, cioè il Battista, sia anche il patrono di San Juan
Hermita; il nome del villaggio, però, lascia adito al dubbio che si tratti di un altro
Giovanni (magari identificato dagli Indiani con il Battista o con suo "fratello").

[47] Secondo gli Indiani del luogo, agendo così, i *Ladinos* ricordano la decapita-
zione del Battista e "chi mangia i polli, che sono il suo corpo, si assicura le qualità
buone" del Santo; spiegazioni, queste, che suscitano l'ilarità dei non Indiani.
Wisdom, *cit.*, p. 449, n. 26.

[48] Per Bánari: Crumrine, *cit.*, p. 27; per Vicam: Beals, *Contemporary Culture*, p.
186; per Navojoa (non più praticato nel 1931): *Ibid.*, p. 144. Per la diffusione in
altre zone dell'America spagnola, v. *e.g.* S. Bernal Villa, "La fiesta de San Juan
en Calderas", in *Revista Colombiana de Folclore*, 2 (1953), pp. 219-221; per l'area
lusoamericana, v. da Câmara Cascudo, *cit.*, *s.v. Joâo*.

[49] Per il folklore: J. G. Frazer, *Il ramo d'oro* (trad. it.), Torino 1950, I, p. 268;
II, p. 347. Le attestazioni più antiche dell'uso fra i Cristiani, uso duramente con-
dannato, sono in Agostino (*e.g.*: *Serm.* 196, 4; PL 38, 1021) e in Cesario d'Arles
(*Serm.* 33, 4; CCL 103, 146). Per l'origine pagana del rito: Lanternari, *cit.*, pp.
329-360. Per la permanenza nell'Europa spagnola alla fine del XVI secolo, cioè
subito dopo la *Conquista*: B. De Falco, *Descrizione dei luoghi antichi di Napoli*, Napoli
1580, citato in P. M. Paciaudi, *De cultu S. Johannis Baptistae*, Romae 1755, p. 345
(e riprodotto dal Lanternari, *cit.*, p. 335). Per l'introduzione del rito nel Nuovo
Mondo ad opera degli Spagnoli, il Lanternari, p. 514, n. 27, rinvia a D. Duran,
Historia de las Indias de Nueva España, México 1867, II, p. 293; v. ora Fray Diego
Durán, *El Calendario Antiguo*, Cap. XIV (XI mese), § 7, di Id., *Historia de las Indias
etc.*, t. I (Biblioteca Porrua, 36), México 1967, p. 276.

⁵⁰ Per l'atmosfera dell'epoca, basti qui rinviare alla "regolamentazione dei fuochi di San Giovanni Battista", in J. Delumeau, *Il Cattolicesimo dal XVI al XVIII secolo* (trad. it.) Milano 1976, pp. 227s. Molto fuorviante e dettata da motivazioni estranee all'indagine storica mi pare la ricostruzione del Lanternari, *op. cit.* Egli vede, nel processo di cristianizzazione della festa solstiziale pagana ad opera della Chiesa (cattolica), "due fasi o momenti — l'azione repressiva e l'azione riplasmatrice" (p. 337). La prima fase sarebbe stata la più antica; testimoniata da Agostino (il Lanternari ignora Cesario d'Arles), avrebbe perdurato per tutto il Medio Evo. Con la Controriforma, la Chiesa cattolica avrebe varato una "nuova forma d'intervento", un "nuovo programma di azione culturale ecclesiastica" (p. 336), cioè l'assorbimento e la cristianizzazione del rito pagano. Questo "mutamento di politica generale della Chiesa verso il paganesimo", sarebbe stato causato dalla "polemica protestante conto le forme di 'paganesimo cristiano'. Laddove i protestanti ... (risultarono) prosecutori del più puro metodo agostiniano, il metodo assunto dalla Chiesa romana fu necessariamente l'opposto" (p. 344). Uno degli esecutori di questa "revisione totale della politica culturale" ecclesiastica sarebbe il Paciaudi, che giungerebbe "ad un ipertrasformismo quanto mai audace e compromettente" (pp. 344s). Nel concreto, il Paciaudi sarebbe responsabile della piena cristianizzazione di tre usanze di origine pagana per la festa di San Giovanni: i fuochi, la combustione delle immondizie e il rotolamento, verso il basso, di una ruota. Per il primo caso, asserisce il Lanternari, il Paciaudi "non esita, consapevolmente obliterando tutta la precedente polemica della Chiesa, a rintracciare il passo del Vangelo giustificativo del rito popolare" (*Io.* 5, 35: Ille erat lucerna ardens et lucens) (p. 344), con un "adattamento" che in nota (p. 515, n. 43) è definito "un altro incomparabile esempio di abilità trasformatrice". In quanto alla ruota, il Lanternari esclama: "Il trasformismo cattolico della Controriforma, spingendosi oltre ogni limite, sbocca nel paradosso storico là dove sostiene esser frutto 'di pietà cristiana e d'ispirazione divina' (cita il Paciaudi) pratiche fino allora combattute" (p. 345). In realtà, il "trasformismo controriformistico" è già ben presente in Jacopo da Varazze (da cui probabilmente dipende il Paciaudi, essendo la *Legenda Aurea* un testo notissimo), che cristianizza le tre usanze, facendo anche lui riferimento a Io. 5, 35 (*Jacobi a Varagine Legenda Aurea* ... rec. Th. Graesse, Dresden/Leipzig 1846, pp. 363s). Ainzi, poiché il buon Vescovo di Genova non ha l'abitudine di inventare soluzioni nuove (e, per le spiegazioni cristiane della combustione delle immondizie — soprattutto ossi —, cita anche la fonte, che è addirittura il teologo parigino Giovanni Beleth, morto nel 1182), ciò significa che la cattolicizzazione delle pratiche, e il riferimento ai passi scritturistici invocati dal Paciaudi, erano tradizionali almeno un paio di secoli *prima* della riforma. Insomma, non capisco perché il Lanternari, il quale giunge ad asserire che: "Il tema mitico teologico della fine del Vecchio Testamento e dell'inizio del Nuovo, come rappresentati rispettivamente da Giovanni e da Gesù, era stato *inaugurato* da Agostino" (p. 515, n. 47 — l'idea, invece, aveva già oltre due secoli di vita ed era stata centrale nelle riflessioni origeniane sul Battista), oppure che: "La personalità di Giovanni era tradizionalmente congiunta col nome Lampas, essendo egli *nativo appunto di Lampas*, località dell'isola di Cipro" (*Ibid.*, n. 45; le sottolineature sono miè), definisca "candido" Agostino (p. 336).

⁵¹ Già nel 1741 gli Spagnoli si attendevano una insurrezione degli Yaqui per il 24 giugno; così il governatore, la vigilia di San Giovanni, fece decapitare due capi innocenti, il più noto dei quali recava nel proprio nome, Juan Ignazio, il segno dell'incontro del culto del Battista con la predicazione dei Gesuiti. Non è un caso che, quasi un secolo dopo, il capo della grande insurrezione yaqui del

1825-1833, noto come Juan Bandera, portasse in realtà gli stessi due nomi. Fra l'altro, questo strano personaggio ebbe una serie di visioni in cui, oltre a parlare con Gesù, la Vergine, San Bartolomeo e molti angeli, incontrò anche il Battista (Spicer, *cit.*, pp. 32-50.130ss).

[52] Così come un gruppo di croci, dette *Crucecitas*, segna il luogo del "martirio" degli altri *Santos*.

[53] *Op. cit.*, pp. 21ss.

[54] *Ibid.*, p. 77. Per lo scavalcamento di santi patroni ad opera di altri santi, v. P. Carrasco, *cit.*, p. 24.

[55] Non i veri *Santos* furono bruciati, ma vecchie statue senza valore; oppure si salvarono in qualche grotta; oppure salirono al cielo in globi di fuoco ... Cfr. Gossen, *cit.*, pp. 269s.274.

[56] Per fare loro scavare il letto dei fiumi. Ichon, *cit.*, p. 114.

[57] Mi sembra, allora, che sia risolto almeno un aspetto dell'interrogativo che poneva il Beals: "Delle fiestas lungo il fiume Mayo, quelle di San Juan sembrano le più importanti ... Qualcuno preferisce Cristo, altri San Juan. Perché San Juan sopra tutti gli altri santi debba avere una parte così importante nella religione, non sono riuscito a scoprirlo. Senza dubbio la ragione storica sarebbe di considerevole interesse, poiché getterebbe luce non solo sulla psicologia indiana, ma su quella dei primi missionari in Messico"; *Contemporary Culture*, p. 134.

[58] *Ibid.*, p. 199.

[59] Altri *Juanes* hanno aspetti chthonî: *Juan Lopez* o *Lopez Shunton* (*Shun* è l'esito locale di *Juan*), eroe culturale di Amatenango e di Aguacatenango (M. E. Hunt Verbitsky, *The Dynamics of the Domestic Group in Two Tzeltal Villages: A Contrastive Comparison*. Microfilm Thesis n° 9048, Chicago 1962, pp. 34s), connesso con "il fulmine che abita nella grotta"; *Juan No* o *Nog*, identificato con un vulcano da certi indiani guatemaltechi, sorta di dio del fuoco, che si procura servi facendo morir di vaiolo la gente (G. Correa, "El Espíritu del Mal en Guatemala. Ensayo de Semántica Cultural (1955), in *Nativism*, pp. 75s). Il Battista è coinvolto in modo solo indiretto, in quanto *Juan* è ormai nome caratteristico nella tribù, con *Juan Chamula*, vagabondo romantico e altruista, la cui "anima sola" è invocata come potenza delle tenebre (C. Navarrete, *Oraciones a la Cruz y al Diablo. Oraciones populares de la Depresión de Chiapas*, México 1968, pp. 80s).

[60] Oltre a Gossen e Pozas, *citt.*, resta indispensabile R. Pozas Arciniega, *Monografía de Chamula* (Microfilm Collection of Manuscripts on Middle American Cultural Anthropology, 15), Chicago 1947, per quanto la scarsa attenzione da lui riservata agli aspetti religiosi sia ben nota: R. M. Laughlin, "The Tzotzil", *HMAI* VII/1 (1969), p. 155.

[61] La vita degli oltre 40.000 Chamula, suddivisi in tre *barrios* (*San Juan*, *San Pedro* e *San Sebastián*), ruota attorno ad un centro religioso, politico e culturale in senso lato. Questa specie di "capoluogo" è abitato quasi esclusivamente dai funzionari politici e religiosi (che durano in carica un anno) e dalle loro famiglie, costituendo un insediamento secondo il modello definito "vacant town". Per i Chamula esso segna "l'ombelico della terra" e, essendo sede della chiesa, dedicata a *San Juan*, e delle croci sacre nell'atrio della stessa, è il luogo privilegiato delle manifestazioni religiose "cattoliche" ed uno dei centri principali — oltre alle montagne, alle grotte, alle sorgenti e alle croci sacre nei *barrios* — dei culti non dedicati ai *Santos*. Dopo la cacciata del prete cattolico, il divieto di residenza stabile ai commercianti *ladinos* e il divieto di pernottamento per i non Indiani di passaggio, Chamula è uno dei pueblos maya più "centripeti" e meno aperti al mondo dei *Ladinos*. Oltre alla bibliografia già indicata, si vedano: N. A. Quown e J. Pitt-Rivers (edd.), *Ensayos*

de Antropología en la zona Central de Chiapas, México 1970 (i contributi di Pitt-Rivers, Adams, Calnek, Klein, Wagner, Montagu, Hermitte, Metzger/Williams); Tax, *Heritage* (il contributo di Wisdom e quello di Cámara, per il concetto di "organiz-zazione centripeta"); E. Z. Vogt, *Zinacantan. A Maya Community in the Highlands of Chiapas*, Cambridge M. 1969, pp. 733; Id. (ed.), *Los Zinacantecos. Un Pueblo Tzotzil de los Altos de Chiapas* (INI — Colección de Antropología Social, 7), México 1966, pp. 496; Id., "Gods and Politics in Zinacantan and Chamula", in *Ethnology*, 12 (1973), pp. 99-113. Per una diversa metodologia (di tipo storico-sociologico), v. H. Favre, "Notas sobre el Homicidio entre los Chamulas", in *ECM*, 4 (1964), pp. 305-322 e, soprattutto, Id., *Changement et continuité chez les Mayas du Mexique. Contribution à l'étude de la situation coloniale en Amérique Latine*, Paris 1971, pp. 352. Per una particolare attenzione ai fenomeni storici, v. V. Bricker R., *Ritual Humor in Highland Chiapas*, Austin 1973, pp. 257 e Id., *Indian Christ*; M. J. McLeod e R. Wasserstrom (edd.), *Spaniards and Indians in Southeastern Mesoamerica. Essays on the History of Ethnic Relations*, Lincoln 1983, pp. 291; R. Wasserstrom, *Class and Society in Central Chiapas*, Berkeley 1983, pp. 357. Per le visite dei *Santos*, v. spec. R. Was-serstrom, "The Exchange of Saints in Zinacantan: The Socioeconomic Bases of Religious Change in Southern Mexico", in *Ethnology*, 17 (1978), pp. 197-210 e, per le analogie al di fuori dell'area tzotzil, L. Crumrine Scoggins, *Ceremonial Exchange as a Mechanism in Tribal Integration among the Mayos of Northwest Mexico* (Anthropological Papers of the University of Arizona, 14), Tucson 1969, pp. 52, confluito in buona parte in Crumrine, *cit.* Per una storia critica del concetto di "centro cerimoniale", si veda l'utilissimo M. J. Becker, *Theories of Ancient Maya Social Structure: Priests, Peasants, and Ceremonial Centers in Historical Perspective* (Occa-sional Publications in Anthropology, Ethnological Series, 53), Greeley Co. 1984, pp. 89.

[62] Nell'ordine: *San Juan, San Sebastián, San Mateo* (maggiori) e *Santa Rosa, San Rosario* e *Santo Cristo* (minori): Favre, *Changement*, pp. 248ss, la cui lista pare la più accurata; diverso Pozas, *Monografía*, p. 368. L'opposizione maggiore/minore, intesa come "fratello maggiore/fratello minore" è una categoria fondamentale nel modo di pensare dei Maya contemporanei. Spesso un *Santo* importante è rappre-sentato da due statue, di cui la più grande raffigura il "fratello maggiore" dell'altra; ciò avviene anche per *San Juan* in Chamula (Pozas, *Chamula*, p. 160). La necessità di un tale sdoppiamento è così forte che a Zinacantán, per Natale, vi sono due Bambin Gesù in un unico presepio (Vogt, *Zinacantan*, p. 394; *Los Zina-cantecos*, p. 94). Forse è possibile istituire un parallelo con gli antichi miti maya (*Popol Vuh*), dominati dalla presenza di coppie di gemelli.

[63] Il Gossen (*cit.*, spec. pp. 27-43) sottolinea l'importanza del culto solare in Chamula, con il sole identificato con Gesù Cristo. Poiché il mondo mentale cha-multeco sarebbe dominato da un'opposizione luce/tenebre, caldo/freddo, maschio/femmina, quest'opposizione troverebbe un riflesso anche nell'anno "sacro" del villaggio. Esso sarebbe composto da una parte "solare", che inizia a Natale e finisce con la festa di San Giovanni (solstizio estivo), e da una parte "in discesa", tenebrosa, che inizia dopo San Giovanni e culmina con la notte di Natale e la nascita del nuovo sole. Egli osserva che, mentre le feste principali (Car-nevale e *San Juan*) sono nella metà "solare" dell'anno, nell'altra vi sono quattro feste, tutte di *Santas* (femmine) e non così seguite come le due principali: *Santa Rosa* e *Asunción* in agosto, *Virgen Rosario* a ottobre, *Guadalupe* a dicembre. La certezza verrebbe dal fatto che, nel calendario sacro da lui individuato, il primo giorno del primo mese è (o era in quell'anno) il 26 dicembre. A tale ipotesi, per quanto affa-scinante e tale da spiegare l'importanza (sostiziale) della festa di San Giovanni fra

i Chamula, devono opporsi serie obiezioni. In primo luogo, dato che l'anno maya è di 360 giorni, *seguiti* da cinque giorni infausti, se esso inziasse il 26 dicembre, essendo infausti i cinque giorni precedenti, significherebbe che il Natale, il giorno cioè della nascita del nuovo sole, è un giorno infausto (è parere diffuso che i cinque giorni cadano oggi di Carnevale). In secondo luogo, se l'inizio dell'anno è il 26 dicembre, non è chiaro perché la rotazione dei funzionari avvenga il primo gennaio, con una festa di tre giorni (per i funzionari civili; quelli religiosi si insediano in concomitanza con varie festività durante l'anno. Alcune date in Pozas, *Monografía*, p. 368 = *Chamula*, pp. 164s; diverse in Gossen, *cit.*, pp. 202.228). In terzo luogo, se l'anno è centrato su di un culto solare, non si capisce perché il Natale sia una festa secondaria e con una scarsa partecipazione di fedeli. In quarto luogo, nella metà ''solare'' dell'anno si ha prima una festa come il Carnevale, in cui il ruolo predominante è quello svolto dalle ''scimmie'', danzatori impersonanti le forze del male e delle tenebre, e poi la festa della Settimana Santa, *dopo l'equinozio*, in cui le potenze delle tenebre addirittura uccidono il Sole/Gesù (segno del dominio temporaneo delle tenebre è che i bastoni del comando, che distinguono le autorità del pueblo, siano chiusi in chiesa per l'intero periodo; Pozas, *Chamula*, pp. 160s. Identico fenomeno anche altrove: Beals, *Ethnology*, p. 75). In quinto luogo, nella parte ''tenebrosa'' dell'anno v'è una festa di tre giorni (dal Gossen ricordata solo in n. 11 a p. 362), con l'intervento di una banda musicale (è l'unica *fiesta* di *Santos*, oltre a quella di *San Juan*, ad averla; Pozas, *Chamula*, p. 171) e con il lavaggio sacro delle vesti dei *Santos* (come in tutte le feste principali, ma non a Natale; *Ibid.*, p. 173): quella di San Matteo. Orbene, questo *San Mateo*, detto anche *San Salvador* e *San Manoel*, è la stessa statua che, fungendo da Cristo (*Santo Entierro*), viene vegliata e poi legata alla croce nelle cerimonie della Settimana Santa (Pozas, *Monografía*, p. 368 e *Chamula*, p. 162; Bricker, *Indian Christ*, p. 161), cioè durante la parte ''solare'' dell'anno. *Ergo* l'interpretazione del Gossen è forzata.

[64] Così il Gossen, *cit.*, p. 329; nell'ampio materiale da lui raccolto, soltanto un'altra volta *San Juan* è autore di un battesimo, quello di San Pietro: p. 345.

[65] V. nn. 48 e 49. Per il battesimo di vegetali in occasione della festa di San Giovanni, v. Lanternari, *cit.*, p. 333 e nn. 20-21, pp. 512s.

[66] Per il culto solare: Pozas, *Monografía*, pp. 450ss. Id., *Chamula*, pp. 190.200; Gossen, *cit.*, *passim*; Vogt, *Gods and Politics*, pp. 100s; per l'identificazione con il Padre di Cristo: Pozas, *Monografía*, p. 452 e *Chamula*, p. 190. Per la confusione fra il Cristo e il Padre, comune a tutta l'area mesoamericana: Madsen, *Christo-Paganism*, p. 152; Carrasco, *Tarascan Folk Religion*, p. 23; La Farge e Byers, *The Years Bearer's People*, pp. 113s.

[67] Pozas, *Chamula*, p. 160; Favre, *Changement*, p. 127; secondo Gossen, *cit.*, p. 43, prima di Cristo sarebbero esistiti solo San Giuseppe e la Madonna, la cui sistemazione teologica creerebbe talora delle difficoltà.

[68] Favre, *Ibid.*, p. 128; l'allusione è alla veste completamente bianca dei Chamula, il manto nero (*chamarro*) essendo indossato per le cerimonie e i momenti ufficiali.

[69] Gossen, *cit.*, *passim*. In quanto a *Juan* come nome distintivo dei Chamula a livello popolare, v. n. 59.

[70] Pozas, *Chamula*, p. 160; Favre, *Changement*, p. 128; l'azione è anche attribuita a Gesù: Gossen, *cit.*, racconti nn° 137, 146 e 163. Visto che in alcune formule liturgiche Gesù Cristo è chiaramente identificato con il mais (Gossen, *cit.*, p. 183), mi sono chiesto se una funzione di *San Juan* come quella qui esaminata non possa anche essere spiegata con una lettura indiana della scena del battesimo. Altri santi patroni, però, partecipano alla scoperta del mais, inseriti in un mito preispanico,

come Santa Lucia ad Amatenango (v. n. 31), la quale santa, per altro, è anche detta aver ottenuto il mais da *Santo Tomás* di Oxchuc, in cambio del proprio amore (Nash, *loc. cit.*, in n. 30).

[71] Gossen, *cit.*, racc. n° 145; una bella rilettura indiana del *Genesi*!

[72] Gossen, *cit.*, racc. nn° 115 e 129; anche *San Andrés*, a Larrainzar, municipio vicinissimo a Chamula, prima di fondare il villaggio, deve sconfiggere *Tzotzk'ob*, "Brazo Peludo", il *Dueño de la Laguna* che occupava il luogo: Ochiai, *cit.*, p. 214.

[73] Secondo una leggenda esso sarebbe un "succo di fiori" e dunque sacerrimo; secondo un'altra, invece, sarebbe invenzione dei demoni (idea questa dei missionari?), che avrebbero ubriacato Nostro Padre, il quale, però, sarebbe stato "così felice che volle che anche i suoi figli bevessero"; Gossen, *cit.*, racc. nn° 141 e 137.

[74] Gossen, *cit.*, racc. n° 141.

[75] Thompson, *The Moon Goddess*, pp. 130ss; fra i Chamula vi è ancora il ricordo del mito: Gossen, *cit.*, racc. n° 182.

[76] Numerose tesimonianze in Gossen, *cit.*, racconti nn° 121, 126, 127, 137, 148, 171.

[77] Pozas, *Chamula*, p. 22.

[78] La cerimonia, però, è realizzata dai funzionari addetti al culto di San Sebastiano! Pozas, *Ibid.*, p. 161.

[79] V. i passi citati in n. 76.

[80] Pozas, *Chamula*, pp. 29-35; Favre, *Changement*, pp. 143-166. Una chiesa dedicata a San Sebastiano, e ora in rovina, esisteva in Chamula; la stessa situazione si riscontra a Teopisca, mentre una chiesa — e la festa — di San Sebastiano sono importantissime nel vicino Zinacantán (la cui chiesa è dedicata al patrono, San Lorenzo). Per la centralità del culto di San Sebastiano a Zinacantán, si veda l'ottima analisi della Bricker, *Indian Christ*, pp. 129ss; la peculiarità della situazione religiosa zinacanteca emerge in quasi tutti i lavori del Vogt, ma v. spec. *Gods and Politics*. La notizia su Teopisca è in Pozas, *Chamula*, p. 14, le cui ipotesi sono, però, superate. Solo uno studio più ampio sulla diffusione, l'emergenza e il declino dei culti locali potrà condurre a una reale comprensione di fenomeni di tal fatta.

[81] Come tante pecorelle, verrebbe voglia di dire. Gossen, *cit.*, racc. n° 115; cfr. nn° 129, 126 e il testo a p. 141.

[82] *Ibid.*, racc. n° 171.

[83] In cui si vede la Vergine con bacchetta magica, che conduce i tronchi dal bosco; San Lorenzo che impasta la sabbia e la calce ...

[84] Mentre lavorano a costruire, il sole non sorge per cinque giorni (sono i cinque giorni soprannumerari del calendario maya?); gli Zinacantechi li considerano talora i propri "Santi Padri" e probabilmente *non sono alti*: perciò il campanile della chiesa è così "basso"! In tempi remoti, essi camminavano sulla superficie terrestre; conficcando i loro bastoni nella terra ancora molle, crearono le sorgenti d'acqua. Cfr. Vogt, *Zinacantan*, pp. 303s.326ss; Laughlin, *Dictionary*, *s.v.* *Vašakmen*. Nella radice del nome compare *vašak-*, che significa "otto" e dovrebbe essere correlato con le quattro direzioni del mondo, nel senso che forse erano (o sono) pensati risiedere a coppie, una per angolo, agli estremi della terra.

[85] Vogt, *Gods and Politics*, p. 101 e *passim*; Gossen, *cit.*, spec. la preghiera alle pp. 203-208, in cui il Battista è detto "Signore del cielo" ed è identificato con "Nostro Padre San Matteo, Nostro Signore ... *Jesús*". Il fatto che anche la festa di *San Juan* sia detta "Passione" (Gossen, *cit.*, p. 224), più che da una identificazione del Santo con Cristo, mi pare causato dalla già osservata tendenza, generale fra gli Indiani, ad estendere alle *fiestas* maggiori la terminologia pasquale.

[86] Per quanto gli stregoni chamula siano famosi per far piovere anche in altri *municipios*: Nash, *In the Eyes*, p. 46.

[87] Si veda, ad esempio, il "meccanismo della pioggia", descritto dal Madsen (*Christo-Paganism*, p. 145); cfr. Wisdom, *Chorti*, pp. 391ss e 413s, n. 74.

[88] Gossen, *cit.*, pp. 228s, il quale osserva che il nome indiano di tale intruglio è nome di copertura per lo sperma umano.

[89] Sp. *angel*, "angelo", o yucateco *Canhel*, sorta di bastone-insegna di certi dèi, strumento connesso con il fulmine, in grado di produrre pioggia e vento? Discussione in Vogt, *Zinacantan*, p. 302.

[90] Molti racconti in Gossen, *cit.*, nn° 71, 76, 80, 90, 112, 132, 173 con paralleli indicati *in loco*. Questa stessa divinità, a Zinacantán, va a caccia col fucile e i suoi spari sono i tuoni: Vogt, *Zinacantan*, pp. 459s. Probabilmente, questo "Signore della Terra" degli Tzotzil contemporanei è il risultato del decadimento e della confusione delle antiche divinità maya della pioggia, note in tutta l'area e talora presenti ancora in modo organizzato, come i *Chicchán* studiati dal Wisdom (*Chorti*, pp. 392ss) presso i Chorti. I *Chicchán* della terra, che vivono in grotte ed hanno attributi comuni ad altre divinità della pioggia in altre zone, sono nani.

[91] *Tsontevitz*, il picco più alto della zona; Pozas, *Chamula*, p. 11.

[92] Gossen, *cit.*, racc. n° 127; cfr. n° 124.

[93] *Ibid.*, n° 76.

[94] *Ibid.*, n° 80.

[95] *Ibid.*, n° 127.

[96] *Ibid.*, n° 36; il finale è un *topos* nelle tradizioni popolari indiane e rappresenta uno dei modi in cui emerge e si esprime la frustrazione causata da 450 anni di sfruttamento.

[97] V. n. 61.

[98] J. C. Kennedy, *The Tarahumara of the Sierra Madre. Beer, Ecology, and Social Organisation* (Worlds of Man — Studies in Cultural Ecology), Arlington Heights 1978, pp. 127.129.140ss.

[99] Le danze pasquali sono impersonate da *paskolas*; i *fariseos* sono identificati con i *Ladinos* (hanno volto e gambe dipinte di bianco); alcuni figuranti (*moros*) hanno il corpo dipinto con pallini bianchi, in modo simile ai due misteriosi "giaguari" e presunti "cristi" di certo Carnevale tzotzil (cfr. Bricker, *Indian Christ*, p. 137).

[100] W. B. Jones, "Evangelical Catholicism in Early Colonial Mexico: An Analysis of Bishop Juan de Zumarraga's Doctrina Christiana", in *The Americas*, 23 (1967), pp. 423-432. In generale, v. R. Ricard, *The Spiritual Conquest of Mexico. An Essay on the Apostolate and the Evangelizing Methods of the Mendicant Orders in New Spain: 1523-1572*, Berkeley 1966 (trad. ingl. della I ed. fr., 1933), *passim*; E. E. Sylvest, *Motifs of Franciscan Mission Theory in Sixteenth Century New Spain Province of the Holy Gospel*, Washington 1975, pp. 148.

[101] Con la "sciagura" del Cristianesimo, giunse fra i Maya anche "the origin of witchcraft disputes", secondo la traduzione della Bricker, *Indian Christ*, p. 27, che così interpreta quello che R. Roys (*The Book of Chilam Balam of Chumayel*, Norman 1967 = Washington 1933, p. 79) rendeva: "The beginning of strife by trampling on people".

[102] R. E. Greenleaf, "The Inquisition and the Indians of New Spain: A Study in Jurisdictional Confusion", in *The Americas*, 22 (1965), pp. 138-166; per il relativo "permissivismo", v. Id., "The Mexican Inquisition and the Indians: Sources for the Ethnohistorian", in *The Americas*, 34 (1978), pp. 315-344 (spec. 316ss; l'A. sottolinea che anche il Cristianesimo era una religione "sincretistica"). Vi furono, ovviamente, alcune eccezioni, come l'intervento del vescovo di Oaxaca, Fray

Angel Maldonado, contro i Domenicani nel 1704: cfr. M. C. Zilbermann, ''Ido-latrías de Oaxaca en el Siglo XVIII'', in *Atti* del XXXVI Congresso, *cit.*, II, pp. 111-123.

[103] Ichon, *cit.*, p. 173.

[104] Cfr. Nash, *In the Eyes*, pp. 228s, per la chiara equazione ''Giuda'' = *Ladinos* (per la diffusione del rogo di Giuda anche al di fuori di Mesoamerica, v. *e.g.* il caso degli Indiani Emberáes di Quibdó (Chocó, Colombia), descritto da N. S. de Friedmann, ''La fiesta del indio en Quibdó: un caso de relaciones interétnicas en Colombia'', in *Revista Colombiana de Antropología*, 9 (1977), pp. 65-78).

WACH, ELIADE, AND THE CRITIQUE FROM TOTALITY

Gregory D. Alles

For Joseph M. Kitagawa

''The task of the history of religions is to delineate the religious meaning of humankind's religious experience and its expressions through the integration and 'significant organization' of diverse forms of religious data.... For historians of religions, all particular religious traditions are 'parts' of the 'whole' of humankind's religious experience, and should be studied from the perspective of the whole.''[1]—With these words, Joseph Kitagawa succinctly states the program of that movement in the history of religions with which his name is a virtual synonym. Established by Joachim Wach and catapulted to prominence in the late 1950s and the 1960s under the tutelage especially of the late Mircea Eliade, the ''Chicago school'' has been a dominating force in the history of religions for the last 40 years. As the quote indicates, it has promoted a hermeneutical approach to religion that insists upon religious meaning as a unique, nonreducible dimension of human life, a sort of meaning that invites us to comprehend it in its uniqueness and its totality.

We can gauge the prominence of the Chicago school in part from the criticism that its exemplars have received, intense and sometimes scathing criticism. The most vehement and persistent critics have taken issue precisely with the school's hermeneutical orientation, although not always explicitly. They have preferred analytical to hermeneutical modes of thought, whether in the tradition of logical empiricism, the direction toward which most North American critics have inclined, or in the tradition of a critical, positivistic notion of history, as has been more often the case in Europe.

The contributions of these critics should not be overlooked. Crucial to their cause is the demand—fundamental to all of

scholarship—for a rigorous scrutiny of the available data, to determine whether they merit the interpretations that all too often appear to have been imposed upon them. Recent decades, too, have witnessed an increased rapport with disciplines more analytical (''reductionistic'') in nature and a thriving experimentation with methods that are not strictly interpretive.

But the analytical turn has also had results that are not so patently fortunate. Under its sway, the history of religions has tended in practice to fragment from a more or less unified discipline into a loose collection of positivistically oriented religious studies—a trend that Eliade lamented long ago.[2] Furthermore, it may well be true that to criticize is in some sense to construct at the same time; nevertheless, the devastations wrought by the critics of the Chicago school have left a vacuum that their own constructions have been unable to fill—precisely because they have either focused on details and run the risk of pedantry or have remained content with methodological prolegomena and have even reduced the domain of all significant questions to that of methodological questions.

The hermeneutical and the analytical endeavors will continue; they must continue. But the hermeneutical ideal that the Chicagoans advanced with such vigor invites yet another critique. The critique of analysis has been external and destructive; acting on its ancient motto, ''divide and conquer,'' it has opposed isolated parts and collections of parts to all hermeneutical totalizations. I want to try instead a critique that is internal and ''constructive,'' or, to shift metaphorical domains, ''productive.'' My aim is to exploit tensions between the twin emphases of the Chicago school's program—its insistence on totality and its focus on meaning—to show that they are fundamentally incompatible.[3] I do not intend to contradict the hermeneutical enterprise so much as to continue it dialectically. The result is not an entirely new endeavor but a proposed shift in direction, from the ''hermeneutical'' to what I denote the ''historical,'' from the ''introverted'' to the ''extraverted,'' and from the ''recognitive'' to the ''critical,'' and, indeed, to the ''self-critical.''

Total Hermeneutics and an Integral Understanding

As early as 1924, Joachim Wach announced the conjunction of
totality and hermeneutics that would characterize his institutional
legacy.[4] Sharply criticizing a dominant ''psychologism,'' he wrote:
''A human being is never simply the sum or bundle of certain feel-
ings, drives, sensations, and so on, but an organic whole, a
totality'' (Nur, p. 211). He accused his opponents—sons of chaos
who engaged in atomizing analysis—of destroying beauty,
goodness, and the sacred in order to worship at the feet of a verbal
idol: ''Even if it is not directly expressed, a single little word is
inscribed above all their efforts: *Nur*—'only.' The 'psychologicist'
knows no word more beautiful. He is never so happy as when he
has discovered that something is 'just' something. And he never
tires of expressing his pleasure with that word. Here we clearly see
the destructive character of such a procedure'' (Nur, p. 212). To
atomizing approaches Wach infinitely preferred the centered,
totalistic hermeneutics of a Ranke, a Burckhardt, or a Dilthey.

  In his *Habilitationsschrift*, published in the same year, Wach
extended the basic principles of this critique to fashion an entire
discipline in their image. His first move was to eliminate all pur-
suits that violated the impulse to totality—the impulse to
hermeneutics—by making that impulse the discipline's basic inten-
tion. The subject matter of the history of religions, Wach wrote,
was the multiplicity of religions in their entirety (Rw, p. 22). The
critique of psychologism remained a powerful theme that even-
tually received full, independent statement in an appendix all its
own. It was echoed more broadly throughout the work by remarks
directed against the positivistic temper in general: ''an atomizing
analysis can never dissect... a totality into its elements without
dissolving or destroying it'' (Rw, p. 100).

  But in *Religionswissenschaft*, Wach was really arguing that he
deserved to sit among the humanists instead of among the
theologians on the Leipzig faculty. Thus, he also had to distinguish
the history of religions as sharply as possible from theology and the
philosophy of religion. He appealed to the fundaments of neo-
Kantianism for help. Both theology and philosophy, he said, were
normative disciplines and deductive, not descriptive. In the hiatus

between evaluation and depiction, knowing and choosing (Rw, p. 27-28), what is and what ought to be (Rw, p. 63), we can hear overtones of totality and hermeneutics. The concern of theology, Wach said, centers entirely on the dogmatic formulation of a single, specific religion (Rw, pp. 60-62). Philosophy, itself normative and prophetic, addresses the question of the *Wesen* of religion: it identifies the single, true religion.

Once Wach had expelled from his discipline all pursuits that violated totality and hermeneutics, he had to stipulate how this double impulse—the impulse to both totality and hermeneutics—should manifest itself in practice. Ultimately, he averred, the history of religions was a totality, a unity (Rw, p. 192). A loose and amorphous conglomeration of religious studies could hardly be an adequate model for the discipline that Wach envisioned.[5] If it were necessary to divide the seamless robe of the study of religion, Wach would cut it along creases made by two different kinds of totality, a "longitudinal" totality and a "latitudinal" one. He called these two branches of the hermeneutics of religion "history" and "systematics."

Work in history stood within the confines of the famed "hermeneutical circle:" "the spirit of the whole can only be comprehended indirectly, by comprehending the parts, and all particulars can only be fully understood through the principle that is active within them" (Rw, p. 49). A century earlier, Hegel had taught the difference between a bad infinity (a random, unending enumeration) and a good infinity (the infinite as an ordered, structural whole). In search of the latter, Wach urged the student of religions to seek the *Mittelpunkt*—the precise metaphysics are too intricate to concern us here (cp. pp. 49-52)—through which, he said at the close of an extended simile, "all the separate traits combine and supplement one another to form a complete picture" (p. 55).

The other branch of the discipline, "systematics," proved to be more than simply an alternative manifestation of totality. It was itself called into existence by the demands of totality. The history of religions could not remain *just* history. The investigation of becoming impelled us, Wach said, to reflect upon that which had become, to examine it "in cross-sections," "systematically."

''From research in the historical study of religions the demand for a comprehensive or holistic vision (*Zusammenschau*) and a comprehensive or holistic ordering (*Zusammenordnung*) has been raised repeatedly'' (Rw, p. 188).

Finally, to complete the outlines of Wach's early model, the obsession with totality governed Wach's view of the activity of the student as well as his view of the subject studied. If, good academicians that we are, we think that the history of religions is an activity of the mind or of reason, our latent analytical tendencies have misled us. Totality insures that the history of religions is not *just* a rational pursuit. ''Whoever understands understands with his entire person (*mit der 'Totalität des Gemütes'*)'' (Rw, p. 31). Thus, wherever we turn in this vast mansion of Wach's youth, we see a design that works out the implications of a two-fold architectonic concept. Wach's *Religionswissenschaft* was a vast monument to meaning conceived as the systematic ordering of parts in a whole.

When Wach migrated from Germany to America toward the beginning of the *Nazizeit*, his attention shifted from what he might have called the formal to the material, from what we would call method to substance, but the same categories continued to dominate his thought. Romantic hermeneutics now provided the paradigm according to which Wach conceived of religion rather than of its study: religion was the relation of inner subjectivity to its objectifications, it was religious experience—the confrontation of the inner subject and the intended object—taken together with its expressions.

The criteria that Wach devised to identify religious experience displayed a proper reverence before the altar of the whole. To state them summarily: in genuine religious experience the human being as a whole confronts and reacts to *the* Totality.[6] Wach's totalistic formulation had two significant consequences. First, human beings were finite, and, Augustine nagged, *finitum non capax infiniti*: only God, Wach suggested sententiously, could truly be aware of the whole (CSR, p. 15). Human beings had to grasp the whole under the guise of the part (the symbol), which was in turn expressed in thoughts, actions, and forms of organization. Secondly, the holy, as totality, could not be a particular value, like the good, the beautiful, or the true. Religion was not simply one cultural

manifestation among many, the study of religions not simply one among several *Geisteswissenschaften*. From the holy, all values derived. Religion was "not a branch but the trunk of the tree" (Soc, p. 16).

Even in America, however, Wach was too enamored of epistemology to neglect method altogether. His totalistic, hermeneutical conception of relgion demanded a totalistic, hermeneutical response, a response that he vaguely called an "integral understanding." "Interpretation of expressions of religious experience means an integral understanding, that is, full linguistic, historical, psychological, technological, and sociological enquiry, in which full justice is done to the intention of the expression and to the context in which it occurs, and in which this expression is related to the experience of which it testifies" (Types, p. 29).[7] The religious symbol, too, had its counterpart in the activity of the scholar. In place of the earlier *Mittelpunkt*, Wach advocated that our thought gravitate to what he called the "classical," for mediating between the infinite and the particular, the classical identified the significant, "the typical," and thus gave order to the chaotic infinity of the potentially interesting (Types, p. 56).

In America as in Germany, then, two themes conjoined to shape Wach's thought: hermeneutics and totality. But these themes did not shape only Wach's thought. It is not my place to comment on Wach's character, on his alleged eirenic temperament.[8] Let me simply note that totality and hermeneutics clearly governed the style as well as the substance of Wach's writing. In his later works, for example, Wach was fond of citing the views of a multitude of authors on a single point. His purpose was not to discuss their ideas in detail—subtle nuances did not concern him—but simply to invoke a certain general consensus—consensus, of course, is for some reason what many hermeneuts think human communication is all about.[9] Moreover, Wach's writings idiosyncratically ignored the particular as such (the infinity of the potentially interesting!). He thought, taught, and wrote almost entirely in general holistic schemes, a trait that still provokes unmeasured frustration in those who prefer a prose organized more artfully.

By the time of his death in 1955, Wach had anticipated the program that his successor at the head of the Chicago school would

pursue. Early in his career, Wach had noted two shifts in the scholarly study of religion that later characterized Eliade's thought: a shift from examining subjective religious experience to examining the intended "object" of that experience, and from formulating positivistic laws and developmental schemes to morphology and other types of structural thought.[10] Eliade was never quite the man of totality that Wach was. Perhaps in part for that reason his writings are infinitely more interesting than Wach's, at least when we first encounter them. But to those who knew him, Eliade often seemed—with his prodigious and comprehensive erudition, his profound insight, his creative muse, and his own humane gentleness—at least a near approximation to the total person, a man of meaning, being, and truth. And for Eliade, too, hermeneutics and totality together guided the history of religions, a conjunction that Eliade himself once christened a "total hermeneutics."

In the much cited article that announced the birth of a new journal (*History of Relgions*) in 1961, Eliade wrote:

> ... *homo religiosus* represents the "total man"; hence, the science of religions must become a total discipline in the sense that it must use, integrate, and articulate the results obtained by the various methods of approaching a religious phenomenon. It is not enough to grasp the meaning of a religious phenomenon in a certain culture and, consequently, to decipher its "message" ...; it is also necessary to study and understand its "history," that is, to unravel its changes and modifications and ultimately to elucidate its contribution to the entire culture.[11]

Viewed from the rest of Eliade's corpus, this quote tends in the wrong direction. When Eliade invokes totality, he is usually advocating something quite different. For when Eliade insists that history does not reveal *all* of a phenomenon (cp. Shaman, p. xiv), when he deplores all specialization as making its object banal and implores historians of religions to produce *oeuvres* instead of erudite monographs (Quest, pp. 61-62), he has a very particular point in mind. "A religious datum," he wrote in the same article from which I quoted above, "reveals its deeper meaning when it is considered on its plane of reference, and not when it is reduced to one of its secondary aspects or its context" (Quest, p. 6). Thus, when Eliade insists that *homo religiosus* is a total person, he is generally pleading that hermeneutics not be lost in collection and analysis

(Quest, p. 4), that the messages waiting to be deciphered not be overlooked; he is pleading for the integrity and the autonomy of the one nonreducible element of religion that the "positivists" always seem to miss: the source of meaning, being, and truth, the Sacred (Patterns, p. xiii).

In reaction, Eliade's own *oeuvre* focuses intently not exactly on the source of all values but on a particular, independent value conceived of as a universal structure of consciousness,[12] a "wholly other" that "irrupts" into the human world of space and time. In addition—an addition crucial for Eliade's hermeneutics—the irruptions of the Sacred constitute a totality, an integral, coherent system that crosses the bounds of culture and history (cp. Patterns, p. 8). Thus, hierophanies confront human beings with a fundamental paradox: every hierophany is condemned to incompleteness— Augustine nags again—but every hierophany tends to reveal the Sacred in its totality (Patterns, p. 26). As a result, to be understood, every hierophany must be placed in the context of the Sacred as a totality. Eliade attempts to elucidate that totality ahistorically—for religion is reversible (Shaman, p. xix)—not through a typology of constituted forms (for such an approach would ignore the limits implied by the historicity of every hierophany) nor through a phenomenology that relies upon an immediate encounter of the interpreter with the particular (for that approach would ignore the impulse to totality) but through a comparative morphology of constituent structural elements.

Here it is that the insistence on a total approach quoted above stands as such a necessary corrective. To the disappointment of the unimaginative, Eliade's *homo religiosus* is never found "in the field"—and was never meant to be. Morphology identifes fundamental constituents or building blocks. It must always be supplemented by ethnography and history, a point Eliade underscored with his last, great, three-volume work. But insofar as the proper task of the historian of religions lies in uncovering the meaning of religious phenomena, the morphology of the irruption of meaning occupies the seat of honor. The result is structures that are familiar to us all: overcoming spatial chaos through orientation about a center and overcoming the relativizing effects of time through the replication of transhuman, transtemporal paradigms. The irrup-

tion of the Sacred finds its reflex in various techniques that seek to appropriate meaning and being, techniques dominated by the structure of initiation: rites of passage, shamanism, yoga, alchemy, and—in these latter days of the second fall, when the sacred must not only be appropriated but the very possibility of meaning and being recovered on a global scale—the history of religions (cp. Quest, ''Preface'').[13]

The Critique from Totality

''He who has never struggled with his fellow-creatures, is a stranger to half the sentiments of mankind''—thus Adam Ferguson, Scottish Enlightener, friend of Adam Smith and David Hume.[14]

The Chicago school conjoined a perspective with a claim. Endorsing the perspective of hermeneutics, its exemplars viewed religion as fashioned in the image of meaning. At the same time, they claimed to study—and demanded that others study—religion in its totality. The compound that resulted from their fabrications is unstable. Measured against the claim, the perspective is inadequate. Hermeneutics cannot study religion in its totality. I have quoted Ferguson's sentiment as a sign both of the content of my critique and of my method. In one sense, conflict is part, perhaps a major part, of what the hermeneut ignores. In another, conflict provides the means for redressing the inadequacy. As I have suggested already, that means is a critique from totality.

At first sight, the notion of a ''critique from totality'' may seem to be a contradiction in terms. Was not the Enlightenment, that paradigm of all ''Western'' critical effort, critical precisely because it rejected totality and opposed common sense and concrete details to rationalistic system-building and metaphysical speculation? Was not the nineteenth century—the era of the history of recovery, of the hermeneutics of retrieval, and of systematic, speculative idealism—the era of totality *par excellence* and to that extent the era of a *non*critical relativism after it ceased to be the era of philosophical absolutism? When Georg Lukács introduced Hegel's dialectical totality into the critical philosophy of society, did not his successors gradually deviate precisely from Lukác's initiative, so

that eventually Theodor Adorno elevated the rhetorical repudiation of totality (the essay) to the principal weapon of critical philosophy and Martin Jay had to write a history of the flirtation of Western Marxism with totality as in general a history of its progressive cooling off?[15] Have not the most outspoken critics of Western cultural scholarship since "World" War II lambasted, as did Edward Said, the very notion of totality as an instrument of Western colonial domination and cultural imperialism: "All Arabs ..."?[16] And is not Said himself simply representative of a broader post-structuralist movement that rejects identity and totality in favor of nonidentity, difference, displacement, and desire, or that, in Jacques Derrida's provocative play on words, sees reality as made of "holes" rather than of "wholes"?[17] In short, are not the hallmarks of the Romantic concern for totality—its rejection of "analytical methods, reduction to elements, [and] disintegration through reflection"[18]—the hallmarks of ideology, of repression and domination, or (for those who resist the Marxist socialization of critique) of groundless speculation, of inaccuracy, of quasi-mystical confusion, or of inevitable equivocation rather than of rigorous thought?

No one can deny that the notion of totality has been used to repress and to obscure, but it is premature to presume that the invocation of totality is always obfuscating or repressive. Analytic thought is not itself immune from attack. Some prefer their critiques socialized. What then has "bourgeois culture" been, if not "analytic:" individualizing, detotalizing, and utilitarian in dealing with human beings as well as in dealing with nature? We may reject such socialization, but we have not thereby preserved analysis from attack. Analysts, proliferating themselves today on such a grand scale, remain enslaved to their own generally unacknowledged perspectives—to the unquestioned procedures of analysis itself. Like giant jellyfish, they engulf and digest whatever they encounter, occasionally changing digestants ("paradigms," "explanatory strategies") for the sake of efficiency, but never allowing themselves or their activity to be exposed to potentially toxic reagents in return. Their activity ultimately serves the rather unimpressive ends of simple self-confirmation.

Nor is it clear anymore that the latest and most sophisticated celebration of the meaninglessness of the particular, ''post-structuralism,'' leads anywhere besides bankruptcy.[19] The age may end; life does not. The no longer New Criticism, initially proposed to break the author's intent, may have erred in describing texts in themselves; to reverse the procedure and to deconstruct texts in themselves—to show the allegedly meaningful as meaningless—does little to redress the error. To the extent that deconstruction still isolates and idolizes language and the products of linguistic expression, it simply recapitulates the fundamental flaw of so much of twentieth century thought: life is not language; neither the world nor the speaker can be collapsed into the medium. The wish to do so is nothing but a dream.

If we dismiss ''totality'' too quickly, we run the risk of dismissing significant critical possibilities and reverting to a crypto-preservatism. There may well be genuine force in Lukács's retraction of his youthful Hegelianism; nevertheless, could Lukács have been entirely mistaken in proclaiming so vehemently the critical possibilities of totality in his justly famous essay, ''What is Orthodox Marxism?''[20] I tend to favor a view that sees in the critique from totality a moment, and a necessary moment, in a formal activity of thought and communication, dialectic. To quote a contemporary thinker:

> Considered as a method, dialectic determines the relation of the one and the many. Between the two there exists an immanent logic, in so far as the many only appears as the many in relation to the one, and conversely the one first becomes intelligible as what is not the many. This formal structure constantly stands the test in relation to all substantial themes.[21]

Several points should be noted here. (1) Identity and totality are inevitable, even in their denial. They are implied by the very nature of thought itself. (2) As an element of dialactic, totality is not confined to a particular domain, such as the meaningful or the material.[22] In fact, the very notion of totality condemns any attempt to absolutize a particular articulation of totality. (3) As a result, the appeal to totality plays a crucial, critical role in a procedure that does not dispense with ''wholes'' but replaces an inadequate articulation of totality with another that is intended to be more adequate.

Rüdiger Bubner has tentatively suggested the possibility of refor-mulating Hegel's *Logic* in a manner compatible with present-day thought:

> ... tensions arise to the extent that each concept makes a claim to totality for itself and thus makes every other concept which differs in content into a com-petitor. If the claim to totality is made, concepts become, despite their dif-ferences in content, incompatible with each other, since, although they designate something else, they allow no free space alongside themselves for the remaining concepts.... one concept stands to the other in the peculiar relation of denying its claim to totality in order to assert the same claim on its own behalf.... Thus one concept drives the next forward, because all con-cepts intend the same, and none completely fulfills this intention.[23]

Dialectic is the counterpart in thought to conflict in practice. The disposition to both—to dialectic and to conflict—is unavoidable. The critique from totality that results has a direct bearing upon the Chicago school's attempt to articulate the totality of religion *via* hermeneutics.

Many have soundly criticized Mircea Eliade for being an "anti-historian." Few besides Eliade himself have recognized what a critique from totality demands instead: historian or not, Eliade does not ordinarily write about religion. "It is unfortunate that we do not have at our disposal a more precise word than 'religion' to denote the experience of the sacred" (Quest, "Preface"). Hermeneutics—the drive to "decipher" "deeper meanings"— overwhelms the impulse to totality. Concerned to do justice to what he sees as the one irreducible element of religion, its intended object, Eliade writes a history of religions capable of doing justice virtually to that element alone. He has in effect drafted the "objec-tivist" counterpart to the earlier "Psychologismus," and he is sub-ject to the same critique. Religion is not *just* hierophany; it is not simply the dialectic of the sacred.[24] To the extent that we can speak of an autonomous, intended object of religion at all (I am not entirely comfortable with this manner of speaking), the history of relgions must include the entire interaction of the subject and the object, human activity as well as divine. By itself, Eliade's mor-phology of the sacred can never be sufficient.

I am not suggesting that Eliade's morphology simply needs to be supplemented—a point that Eliade himself conceded. Eliade's obsession with hierophanies combines with his insistence on totality

to produce a holism that is premature, if not completely misplaced. It is one thing to claim that on a global scale there are complexes of human behavior and experience that we can assimilate to Western notions of religion and thus partially elucidate. It is quite another to presume at the beginning of our endeavors that an identical ''object'' underlies all these forms, even if only as a universal structure of consciousness—an identical object that must be isolated from its context and understood holistically before religion can make any sense. Such a suggestion seems highly improbable, given the vast differences that, we know full well, separate the various religions. It is likely to interest only those who believe that the sacred exists as something other than the structures of our own minds; and, in fact, it is likely to interest only a limited number of them.

What disturbs me most, though, about Eliade's ''total'' hermeneutics are its implications for creative scholarly work. A hermeneutics geared to recovering the archaic experience of the hierophany has to ignore many topics of great significance in other models of the history of religions. Eliade's predecessor at Chicago provides us with a convenient example. Because Wach sought to elucidate not the manifestations of the sacred but the forms of expression that derived from the encounter between the human and the divine, the social forms of religious expression—to use Wach's language—constituted a major current of his thought. In Eliade's writings that current dwindled to a trickle of comments on technicians of the sacred, for in a discipline organized around the morphology of the sacred, questions of organization and authority belonged of necessity to the historical context of any given hierophany. The sacred never manifests itself as an entire human community.

In a sense, then, Wach could encompass more with his *Religionswissenschaft* than Eliade could with his morphology. Like his fellow Chicagoan, however, he attempted to conjoin hermeneutics and totality, and he met with just as little success—or rather, just as much. But in the end, the paradigm of hermeneutics overwhelmed the impetus to totality. To be more precise, Wach's hermeneutics appropriated the claim to totality for itself alone and in doing so deprived totality of its vitality. I begin my critique with a part and work toward a critique of the whole.

In both method and substance Wach was, to echo Ferguson, "a stranger to half the sentiments of mankind." In method, Wach attempted to articulate a position that requires the minimum of substantial commitment in order to achieve a minimum of scholarly conflict and a maximum of scholarly consensus. In doing so, he displayed a remarkable sensitivity to the remarkably sensitive dynamics of a working scholarly community. He also displayed a remarkably feckless attitude toward the activity that is that community's only *raison d'être*, rigorous thought. In terms of substance, Wach favored the eirenic side of religion in a manner that was hopelessly utopian. More specifically, he ignored—at most he merely touched upon—the topic of religion and conflict: "The worst [instrument of propagation] has been the use of violent means (persecution, coercion) in the service of religion with a total disregard for individual conscience" (CSR, p. 119). But for the historian of religions, the real question is not whether these means of propagating religion are good or bad. The real question is to what extent they—along with other forms of conflict—form an integral part of certain religions, certain religious phenomena, and even "religion itself." We cannot simply ignore Lucretius's scathing, ancient indictment of Iphigenia's sacrifice: *tantum religio potuit suadere malorum* [so much evil has religion wrought] (*De natura deorum* 1.101).

Wach's flight from conflict, like Eliade's meager comments on society, was a symptom of a greater, more systemic defect. The example of Wach's attitude toward conflict that I have chosen points straight to the source of his horror: forced conversion violates Wach's standard of genuine religion, the authentic religious experience, an experience that is spontaneous and (in some vague, pacific sense) unifying—totalizing. In the early 19th century, Friedrich Schleiermacher had attempted to rescue theology from rationalism by grounding it in an autonomous variety of experience. His attempt was, of course, part of the general Romantic move to rescue all cultural expressions from the throes of artifice and fragmentation. Recall, for example, Wordsworth's program for a "natural" poetry and Coleridge's search for "the whole truth." It was this Romantic notion of experience, mediated through *der Heilige* (Rudolph Otto), that Wach placed at the center

of religion. All true "external" religious forms, he asserted, derived from "internal" religious states. *Prima facie* such a unilateral assertion seems implausible, precisely because it is unilateral. Others have lent our intuited implausiblity reasoned support. Careful investigations have demonstrated how elements that Wach, along with the Romantics, made entirely derivative—concepts, actions, and communities—actually precondition "experiences." Indeed, on some accounts it is difficult to see how religious experiences, even experiences of the integral sort that Wach envisions, could occur at all apart from such preconditions.[25]

These difficulties with Wach's analysis of religious experience are, however, only part of the problem. The centrality that Wach assigns to such experience opens a window onto an extensive and problematical landscape, the landscape of hermeneutics and totality. The analysis of experience was the pillar of Wach's strategy to assimilate religion to meaning. Before that, it had been the pillar of the strategy by which that earlier admirer of Schleiermacher, Wilhelm Dilthey, had assimilated all the human sciences to hermeneutics. Dilthey had made meaning—the systemic relation between parts and a whole (the "hermeneutic circle")—the highest category of human value; he derived meaning from the objectification of lived experience (*Erlebnis*); and under the rubric of *Nacherleben*—"re-living," "re-experiencing"—he posited *Verstehen*, "understanding," as the peculiar method of the human sciences. Following Dilthey and the tradition of Romantic hermeneutics in general, Wach called for an integral understanding that not only related various parts to a whole but also specified the relation of all external forms to their experiential origins. In method, he assigned priority to the procedure of "re-cognition"—Eliade, too, occasionally adopted the language of "reliving" (cp. Quest, p. 10)—and with regard to practice he chided those who neglected the holistic vision and engaged in "reduction" for ignoring the meaning of the phenomena that they studied.

But when Wach made the history of religions an interpretive discipline with holistic ambitions, he placed too heavy a burden on meaning. A true Romantic, he rejected artifice, collapsed all activity into the expression of experience, and thus viewed it *sub specie significationis*. To count as religious, activity had somehow to

be meaningful; in Wach's Romantic view, it had to be understood as giving voice to an internal, subjective experience of the Ultimate. But of course, that religion in which the human is merely the perfect, passive receptacle, and in which the end of all activity is simply the expression and communication of internal states is a ghostly apparition. In this world, there is always more to religion than just meaning.

When scholarly attention shifted after Wach's death from *parole* to *langue*, from meanings to symbolic codes in which religious meanings occurred, the totality that meaning embraced was narrowed even further. For those who know them, gods are not *just* symbols or elements in some cognitive system; they are living, acting beings.[26] We have not exhausted the study of a set of rituals when we identify their progression through some semantic matrix, nor even, for example, when we identify the various "speech acts" that occur in them, as if these acts were nothing but morphemes in a nonverbal "language" of action. Surely the historian of religions is capable of producing more than just taxonomies. As always, we are the victims of our own questions. The preoccupation with meaning—with *parole* and then with *langue*—projects upon all religions the goal for which so many Western theologians, philosophers, scholars, and literateurs have taught us to yearn since the devastations of the Euro-American war of 1914-1918: the recovery of meaning.

I have used Wach to illustrate my objections to a hermeneutical conception of the history of religions because Wach played such a central, historically significant role in the Chicago school. But my objections really extend farther than the type of Romantic hermeneutics that Wach advocated. Hermeneutics in and of itself suffers when it is conjoined with the emphasis on totality that the history of religions requires, for religion is greater than meaning, as life is greater than language. The history of religions must be more than a hermeneutical enterprise. Even in the special province of hermeneutics—the understanding of texts—it is never sufficient for historians of religions simply to decipher a text's meaning, however complicated a procedure of understanding-explanation-understanding they employ.[27] Texts are complex instruments; their production and use requires non-semantic acts and structures with-

out which texts could not exist, acts which condition both their con-
tent and their interpretation. In the case of sacred texts, and many
texts that we might not call "sacred," such acts are *religious* acts.
They are part of the totality that historians of religions claim to
study, even if they are acts that the hermeneutical history of
religions has ignored—and ignored perforce.[28] For even the most
complex hermeneutics will insist on subordinating these acts to the
meaning of the text—on using them as ever more delicate
instruments for teasing meaning out of texts (and whatever else it
is able to force, procrustean fashion, into the mold of the text)—
rather than encompassing both meanings and acts on a larger
totality such as religion.

Let us return to the quote with which I began. The twin poles
of the Chicago school's program point in opposite directions: the
emphasis on meaning obstructs the pursuit of totality. In for-
mulating his vision of the history of religions, Kitagawa has
insisted, and insisted rightly, on the "priority of the whole." The
history of religions must grapple with religion (and religions) in its
(and their) totality. Nothing less will do. The imperialism of
hermeneutics—and of semiotics—must be resisted. The reign of
meaning must end.

Historical, Extraverted, and Critical

To proclaim that a reign must end is bold enough in itself, some
might say rash or haughty. But unless one wishes to glory in
anarchy—and anarchy cannot long endure—it is also wise to back
a rival claimant to the throne. If the history of religions is not to
be hermeneutical, what should it be? I favor a candidate with three
traits: a history of religions that is historical, extraverted, and
critical. A few comments on each will have to suffice.

Historical. Life, it seems to me, is a union of mind and matter,
a dynamic combination of meanings and actions. In the human
studies today only one holistic tradition of any stature breaks the
walls of isolation with which meaning has surrounded itself.[29] The
material dialectics has performed wonderful service in exposing the
pretensions of an autonomous meaning. Nevertheless, the unifica-

tion of mind and matter will never be accomplished by collapsing the one into the other: either by deriving, for example, all culture from a linguistic code or by submerging the meaningful in the infrastructure and rendering the mental nothing more than an epiphenomenon of the concrete. On the latter tactic, the dialectical theorist whom I have quoted already—Rüdiger Bubner—notes: "Not only is [the dogma of dialectical materialism] already fundamentally undialectical just on the grounds that it is a dogma, but its massive prior decision in favor of materialism, in the sense of the emphasis on the economic motive forces of society, also contradicts the formal principle of knowledge of the dialectic."[30]

In the history of religions, I suggest, we require a model of religion grounded in a category that neither idolizes meaning nor dissolves it into that which it is not, a category that further recognizes the dynamic character not only of dialectics but of all scholarly work. One such category might be that peculiar constellation of the dimensions of space (whether they be three, four, nine, or ten), time, and consciousness without which dialectical movement and life itself would be impossible, the event. Before it is anything else, it would seem, religion is a collection of events, among them, events of meaning.

On this view, the history of religions would not be hermeneutics; it would be history. Not history in the sense of systematically weighing evidence to construct as accurate and as sophisticated a narrative of actual, past events as possible.[31] I am thinking not so much of the methods we use as of the questions we raise. For me, "history" includes any study of human affairs that takes the event as its architectonic category, regardless of the methods it employs. I deliberately correlate this view with a metaphysics that assigns priority to actuality rather than to potentiality and an anthropology that sees thought as activity, a variety of human practice. In addition, in my own preliminary attempts at such a history of religions, I have found it necessary to take seriously once again that dimension of life which all but the best hermeneuts (such as Eliade) have been content to ignore: power.[32]

I must confess that I am not attracted to categories such as events, actions, and power simply for intellectual reasons. The hermeneutical history of religions sought to recover meaning for a

European and American audience in the throes of cultural disaster
and despair. Today, it seems, we find ourselves in the midst of a
different struggle. Suppressed peoples everywhere are struggling to
achieve power, recognition, and justice—perhaps for the first time.
The obsession with meaning is yielding to topics that assume
greater significance, even in the isolated groves of academia: ques-
tions of life, the quality of life, action, and power. In proposing a
shift from hermeneutics to history as the model for the history of
religions, I have the needs and struggles of this emerging global
audience in mind.

Extraverted. The hermeneutical history of religions has been
introverted, even when it has not explicitly conjured up the
apotropaic qualities of that quasi-exotic phrase *"sui generis."* A
general hermeneutics assigns priority among human products to
texts and even tries to transform all products of human activity—
including activity itself—into texts.[33] Similarly, the hermeneutical
history of religions has given priority to all expressions of meaning.
In fact, it has discussed the different aspects of religion only insofar
as they could be assimilated to the expression of meaning.

Granted, both Wach and Eliade were too imaginative to remain
within narrow constraints. Wach's work with the sociology of
religious organization effectively added another dimension to his
discipline's purview. Eliade's attempt to recover the forgotten and
forbidden fragments of hierophanies from works of modern art and
literature and from the dream life of *homo modernus* was perhaps the
most daring broadening of the history of religions ever attempted.
But in the end, hermeneutics introverted both Wach's and Eliade's
thought, as it had to. The more daring adventurer was perhaps the
more susceptible. Hermeneutics did not stop with limiting Eliade's
interest to the dynamics of the hierophany. It insisted upon
"reading" all of a religion in terms of its center, and it assigned
privileged status to those persons—*religiosi* in a narrower (but non-
Eliadean) sense—who experienced the irruption of the sacred most
intensely (cp. *Patterns*, p. 6). In the end, Eliade even leaves us
wondering whether we have been reading anything but the private
musings and fancies of a great imagination. The discovery of the
unconscious by depth psychology excuses us, Eliade says, from the

demand to furnish evidence that our interpretations correspond to meanings that the persons under discussion ever consciously held (Quest, p. 21).[34]

In contrast to hermeneutical introversion, history insists upon extraversion. On such a view, the history of religions must encompass *all* events in which religion occurs (including, of course, events of meaning). It may well be that the most obvious events to study are events in which (to adopt traditional language for the sake of convenience) the ''sacred'' and the human interact directly. In terms of religious action, we may think of prayer or meditation, sacrifice, or other common ritual occurrences. But religion does not occur only in specifically religious settings. It may be said to occur in any event significantly influenced by religious relationships, identities, capabilities, and norms—that is, by relationships, identities, capabilities, and norms established or defined by events of direct religious interaction. Religion occurs in these supposedly ''nonreligious'' events because in them religion ''assumes'' concrete form. In them, religiously established realities become actualities. Such events are necessary topics for a history of religions that strives for a comprehensive and integrative grasp of all the events of religion.

In light of this push toward extraversion, historians of religions should reconsider the basic channels that have guided their discourse, the various rhetorical ''commonplaces'' that the phenomenologists of an earlier generation tried so valiantly but so erroneously to reify. Far be it from me to suggest that we turn out such faithful servants as ''myth'' or ''sacrifice'' or ''rite of passage.'' But perhaps we should not be content to work with these concepts alone. If the historical option has any vitality at all, that vitality can only be realized if historians of religions turn their attention to a broad range of topics that they have begun to explore only in recent years, if at all: comparative ethics, art, architecture, music, a comparative study of indigenous grammars—to name only the few that come to mind at the moment.[35]

At its boldest, such extraverted research might, in fact, require us to do work that bears little resemblance to the history of religions of the past. Enchanted with uncharted territory, we might need to beware of transfering new subjects to our own domains too quickly.

We might need to sojourn a while in the territories of other sub-
jects, submitting ourselves to their laws and conventions, before we
finally bring our souvenirs home.

   Critical. Hermeneutics is translation. Its practitioners repeatedly
imitate Hermes, their eponymous ancestor: they dissolve cultural
bounds in order to tame the foreign and make it their own. As a
recent literary critic has written, "the hermeneutical models which
continue to dominate academic criticism ... reconstitute literary
works in the present through a process of thematization, that is, by
reconciling past works with the dominant ideological constructs of
the immediate culture."[36] Hermeneuts make the foreign familiar;
they recover what has been "lost." They may thereby abrogate
their claim to the greatest benefit that the history of religions has
to offer: the critique that makes the familiar foreign.
   We in the "West" desperately need that benefit today. Recently,
the German author Hans Magnus Enzensberger celebrated what
he called "second-order illiteracy." Modern technology, he says,
has made literacy dispensable. A person can get by—and even do
quite well—if only that person is a "second-order illiterate:" func-
tionally literate (able to read directions and technical manuals) but
unable to write or to read intelligently or creatively. The result, in
Enzensberger's estimation, is liberating. Universal literacy was a
political or, even more, a politico-economic program that despoiled
literature by making it an instrument for producing good workers.
Now literature can perform its own business without the
troublesome meddling of boorish entrepreneurs.[37]
   I suspect some irony here. We cannot be entirely happy that, in
Enzensberger's terms, the president of the United States, the
chancellor of West Germany, and the prime minister of Great Bri-
tain all come off as second-order illiterates. I do not suggest that
literature—or the history of religions, for that matter—should
aspire to the role of state or corporate servant, a "privilege" that
literature may be losing and that the history of religions has rarely
if ever enjoyed. But at the same time, to acquiesce to simple
isolation—indeed, to celebrate isolation—is, in the present situa-
tion, somewhat ghoulish. I can speak best to the circumstances in
the United States.

Contemporary American society is dominated—indeed, held captive by—the totalitarian ambitions of what we might call an economic and technological scientism: the analytic reduction of all reality to isolable parts (commodities) subject to ever more advanced instrumental control solely for purposes of economic gain. The attitude infests virtually every arena of American culture, guiding both our cultural production and our political decisions. Under the cover of "modernization" and "development"—all too often euphemisms for economic colonialism—it proliferates itself throughout the world with blinding speed. Is it any wonder that such a scientism—much more obsessed with economics than the "scientism" of the Enlightenement—dominates the institutions that we in the United States employ to initiate our youth? American education stresses beyond measure the development of economic skills and the nurturing of knowledge potentially useful to technology; at the same time, it is decimating and even obliterating those fields not directly related to economic production. The latest strategy advocated by defenders of the humanities—most of them bureaucrats—simply amounts to surrender: peddle the humanities as better preparation for commercial and professional activities than courses specifically about those activities. In a word, become corporate slaves.

In such a climate, a growing number of studies are being reconceived in a critical direction.[38] I suggest that the history of religions join them. Specifically, the history of religions might try to exploit the critical potentials latent in its traditional emphasis on totality ("Whoever knows one knows none"), unrealized potentials which Lukács hinted at so long ago in another realm. Practiced in an idiom that is historical and extraverted, the history of relgions could practice a criticism that delights in the foreign and frolics in defamiliarization. It could exercise its critique from totality in at least three ways.

(1) Analytical economism and technologism operate best under the conditions of a monopoly. They act upon the assumption that they are universal and sufficient. In fact, they are neither. The analytic worldview is and always has been truncated. It encompasses a few aspects of life, and it expels the rest. And religion has always been numbered among the first refugees.

The Romantics voiced a biting critique of "scientism," a criti-
que that both Wach and Eliade shared. But in doing so, they traded
in disembodied meanings, and much as we may admire the
Romantics, we cannot revivify them today. Analysis is too over-
whelmingly economic and technological. Some anthropologists—
our close cousins—have already pointed to the potentials that
enthnography has to defamiliarize the utilitarian, "common-
sense" notions that undergird our current cultural malaise.
Perhaps the history of religions can lend its own peculiar critique
to the cause, a critique that can embrace superstructure and
infrastructure intertwined.

The history of religions can help unveil the insufficiency and
nonuniversality of an analytic, economic technologism in a number
of ways. Of these, I find two especially important. First, the history
of religions can particularize the claims of analysis and in doing so
destroy the claims of monopoly on which it stands. Specifically, I
would suggest that the history of religions can unearth the roots of
our analytical culture in the effaced structures of the official,
political religion of ancient Greece. It can expose economism and
technologism as a play for a limited kind of power over both people
and natural objects, a power whose basic insufficiency was recog-
nized already in the alternative religious movements of antiquity
(women's religions, the mysteries, ascetic and bacchic movements).
Second, by juxtaposing our own behavior and reflection to various
alternatives the history of religions can help expose the excessively
limited, instrumental sense in which our social and technological
engineers ask, "How shall we live?" Perhaps someday we will
begin to answer in terms that are not limited to money and
machines.

(2) The limits of an advanced technologism cannot always
remain concealed. It is well known that many physical scientists
and engineers are intensely interested in questions of religion and
philosophy, if often in a rather simple (because uninformed)
fashion. Their interest does nothing to rattle the dominance of
"scientism." When the unavoidable raises its head, our economic
scientism dominates by trivializing whatever falls outside its
domain.

In America, religious aspirations have been trivialized in two directions. First, they have been submerged into the realm of second-rate fantasy through movies, comic books, cartoons, and— if anyone still reads them—novels of fantastic or magistic bent. Second, the contemporary American milieu has fostered the growth of a religious antitype to analytical science (cp. the debate about "creation science"), a movement that applies scientistic strategies to a book that claims to provide the certainty about life that nature lacks; that is, scientism has fostered a resurgent fundamentalism.

To maintain the scientistic monopoly, it is sufficient for the enlightened to recognize that both moves ultimately violate the canons of science and are thus untenable. For the rest, triviality, superficiality, and simple-mindedness are precisely the traits one desires in a quasi-religion for second-order illiterates. By contrast, the history of religions can disrupt this one-sided alliance. It can place our contemporary trivilizations in a total context among movements that are, frankly, more sophisticated. The attractiveness of vulgar fantasy and fundamentalism is rooted largely in ignorance; as a result, the history of religions renders them untenable.

We should not, however, conclude that the history of religions replaces modern pablum with the sumptuous feasts of other times and other places. The impetus to totality cannot be so easily particularized. The historian of religions inserts every religion into a global context and in the process relativizes and defamiliarizes them all. The shift from meaning to event deprives us of what was for some the last hope of universal salvation: that hermeneutics would recover some sort of covert *philosophia perennis*. Certain hermeneutical aspirations to the contrary, historians of religions do not aim to recover; they aim to understand. They have not come to fulfill.

(3) Sooner or later, the history of religions becomes self-critical. It cannot overlook forever that it is a component, admittedly a fringe component, of European and American culture. As such, it shares the limitations of that culture. In the end, the history of religions must turn the foreignness that it directs against advanced technologism against the world of academics, and against itself.

Seeking to defamiliarize and transform its cultural ambience, it defamiliarizes and transforms itself.

The paradox is that to formulate this critique, we must practice the history of religions. To formulate it most powerfully, we must practice the history of religions as history. To make a terse suggestion: academics, including the history of religions, attempts to manipulate a particular kind of (political) power, not merely in the content of what it says but in its very activities and institutions. Other cultures operate with different configurations of power, configurations that also grow from religious roots. As a result, these cultures have developed different activities, institutions, and contents that count as knowledge and "education." Most distinctively, they have not developed the history of religions.

Some historians of religions—Mircea Eliade is a representative figure—long for a position at the center of European and American culture, indeed, at the center of an emerging global culture. They long to recover the lost status of the objects that they study. In a climate of analytical, technological economism, the central roles—in politics and academics as well as in business—are reserved for more blatantly imperialistic disciplines like analytical sociology and psychology, disciplines that perpetuate European and American domination—the skeletons of the Greek gods—by presuming that their privincial modes of thought and activity are universal and by promoting them as such. In this climate, critique requires a seat on the periphery. Those in the center rejoice in their own importance: they succumb to the demands of domination. From the periphery, historians of religions can critique the particularized totality to which they belong, even if they must participate in it to do so. On the periphery, historians of religions can glimpse and assert the claims of an even greater whole.

I may seem to have strayed far from the views of the mentor in whose honor I have been writing. Those who know Joseph Kitagawa well will recognize that this last critique is not entirely my own. In part, I learned it from him. Kitagawa originally went to Chicago to examine the then-burgeoning school of the history of religions from a foreign perspective, an Asian perspective.[39] He has always remained intensely concerned with what he has called "*Religionswissenschaft*'s map of reality," but he has had to postpone

his original intent. The forces of history compelled him to promote and preserve for our sake what he had planned to criticize instead. In one sense, we have all been Kitagawa's students; we have all benefited from his many professional activities. Now that critique is "in the air," perhaps we should seriously ponder the possibility of a critical history of religions. Perhaps now is the time to run with the banner that, until recently, Kitagawa himself has not been permitted to carry.[40]

Western Maryland College,   December 1986
Westminster, MD 21157   Gregory D. Alles
USA

[1] Joseph M. Kitagawa, "Religious Studies and the History of Religions," in *The History of Religions: Understanding Human Experience* (Atlanta, Ga.: Scholars Press, 1987), p. 152.

[2] Mircea Eliade, *The Quest: History and Meaning in Religion* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969), pp. 1 & 71.

[3] My method has been inspired in a general way by the manner in which Marxist critical theory addresses political economy: cp. Max Horkheimer, *Critical Theory*, trans. Matthew J. O'Connell and others (New York: Herder and Herder, 1972), pp. 225-226. The extent to which I diverge from a Marxist perspective strictly speaking should be evident as the article proceeds.

[4] On Wach's life and work, see Joseph M. Kitagawa, *Gibt es ein Verstehen fremder Religionen?*, Joachim Wach-Vorlesungen 1 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1963), and "*Verstehen* and *Erlösung*: Some Remarks on Joachim Wach's Work," *History of Religions* 11, no. 1 (August 1971): 31-53; Richard W. Scheimann, "Wach's Theory of the Science of Religion," Ph.D. dissertation (University of Chicago, August 1963); Charles M. Wood, *Theory and Religious Understanding: A Critique of the Hermeneutics of Joachim Wach*, AAR Dissertation Series 12 (Missoula, Mont.: Scholars Press, 1975); Rainer Flasche, *Die Religionswissenschaft Joachim Wachs* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1978); and Kurt Rudolph, "Joachim Wach," in *Bedeutende Gelehrte in Leipzig* (Leipzig: Karl Marx Universität, 1965), pp. 229-237. For an extensive bibliography of Wach's work, see Kitagawa, *Gibt es ...?*, pp. 32-36.

Abbreviations in the text refer to the following works by Wach:

CSR   *The Comparative Study of Religions*, ed. Joseph M. Kitagawa (New York: Columbia University Press, 1958)

Nur   " 'Nur.' Gedanken über den Psychologismus," *Zeitschrift für Missionskunde und Religionswissenschaft* (Berlin) 39 (1924): 209-215

Soc   *Sociology of Religion* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1944)

Types *Types of Religious Experience: Christian and Non-Christian* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951)

Rw   *Religionswissenschaft: Prolegomena zu ihrer wissenschaftstheoretischen Grundlegung* (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1924).

For Rw I follow by and large the English of Joachim Wach, *Introduction to the History of Religions*, ed. J. M. Kitagawa, G. D. Alles, and K. W. Luckert (New

York: Macmillan, 1987). At the time of writing, only page numbers to the original German were available.

⁵ Cp. Wach's critique of Edmund Hardy's views, Rw, p. 167.

⁶ Wach specifies four distinct criteria. First, religious experience is an experience of "Ultimate Reality," not of anything finite but of "that which conditions and undergirds all" (CSR, p. 30). Second, religious experience is not a function of the mind or of the will or of the emotions. It is *Erfahrung*, not emotional *Erlebnis*: an experience of the integral person, "a total response of the total being" (CSR, p. 32). The remaining two criteria would seem to follow logically. "*Potentially* this is the most powerful, comprehensive, shattering, and profound experience of which man is capable" (CSR, p. 35; my italics). Finally, the genuine religious experience issues in action; otherwise, it sounds too much like the experience of art (CSR, p. 36). Cp. also Types, pp. 32-33, and Joseph M. Kitagawa, "Primitive, Classical, and Modern Religions: A Perspective on Understanding the History of Religions," in Joseph M. Kitagawa *et al.*, ed, *The History of Religions; Essays on the Problem of Understanding* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967), pp. 39-65.

⁷ Charles Wood notes that Wach is often vague about precisely what he means by "integral understanding" and how it functions in his hermeneutics (p. 37); his indifference leads me to believee that here Wach is pursuing an architectonic image or theme as much as a specific idea.

⁸ See Kitagawa, *Gibt es ...?*, pp. 24-31, and his introduction to CSR, pp. xl-xlvii.

⁹ Cp. Wood, pp. 44-46, for a discussion of the significance of this move in Wach's thought.

¹⁰ On morphology, see Rw, p. 189 (cp. CSR, pp. 24-26); on the "object" rather than the "subject" as the focus of study, see Rw, pp. 191, 193-205 (cp. CSR, pp. 29-32).

¹¹ Mircea Eliade, *The Quest*, p. 8. Abbreviations in the text refer to the following works by Eliade:

Patterns *Patterns in Comparative Religion*, trans. Rosemary Sheed (New York: New American Library, 1963)

Quest   *The Quest* (n. 2)

Shaman *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*, trans. Willard R. Trask (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1964).

Of the many studies of Eliade I must mention at least the following: Douglas Allen, *Structure and Creativity in Religion: Hermeneutics in Mircea Eliade's Phenomenology and New Directions* (The Hague: Mouton, 1978); Thomas J. J. Altizer, *Mircea Eliade and the Dialectic of the Sacred* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1963); Guilford Dudley III, *Religion on Trial: Mircea Eliade and His Critics* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1977); and three "*Festschriften*" edited by Hans-Peter Duerr, *Sehnsucht nach dem Ursprung: zu Mircea Eliade* (Frankfurt a. M.: Syndikat, 1983), *Die Mitte der Welt: Aufsätze zu Mircea Eliade* (Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp 1984), and *Alcheringa oder die beginnende Zeit* (Frankfurt a. M.: Qumran, 1983).

¹² Cp. Quest, p. 7. The differences between Eliade and Wach on this point are subtle. For Eliade, the Sacred is the source of meaning, being, and truth—in the heyday of existentialist phenomenology less was said about goodness and beauty. But Eliade temporalizes Wach's arboreal metaphor. Religion is the trunk of the tree of culture or of the human spirit not simply logically but also chronologically. Originally, to live as a human being meant to live religiously; nutrition and sexuality were religious acts. But universal history replicates the experience of sacred

time: the fragmentation of modern life has broken the *unio primitiva* and has given the Sacred a certain particularity: it is the objectively real but distinct, the infinite *ganz Andere* (a term about which Wach expressed hesitations: CSR, p. 43, 46), that invades and redeems the world of becoming, rather than the totality that undergirds all its particular manifestations. Hence, Eliade's insistence on—and need to insist upon—the autonomy and irreducibility of the sacred.

¹³ At times, Eliade even applies the language of religious techniques to the procedures of the history of religions. In *The Quest*, Eliade speaks of the history of religions as a variety of alchemy: "It is only in so far as he succeeds, through hermeneutics, in transmuting his materials into spiritual messages that the historian of religions will fulfill his role in contemporary culture" (p. 37). Cp. *Images and Symbols: Studies in Religious Symbolism*, trans. Philip Mairet (New York: Harper and Row, 1969), pp. 33-39.

¹⁴ Adam Ferguson, *An Essay on the History of Civil Society, 1767*, ed. Duncan Forbes (Edinburgh: University Press, 1966), p. 24.

¹⁵ Cp. Martin Jay, *Marxism and Totality: The Adventures of a Concept from Lukács to Habermas* (Berkeley: University of California, 1984).

¹⁶ Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978).

¹⁷ I thought I had learned this particular play on words from Vincent Descombes, *Modern French Philosophy*, trans. L. Scott-Fox and J. M. Harding (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), but I am no longer able to find it in either Descombes's volume or in the various works of Derrida himself.

¹⁸ Cp. Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno, *Dialektik der Aufklärung* (Amsterdam, 1947), p. 37.

¹⁹ Many voices have been raised criticizing deconstruction from a variety of viewpoints. The critique I find most telling indicts deconstruction on the charge that it "thinks it has disrupted, when fundamentally it has ony affirmed" (Descombes, p. 109). This line of reasoning is elaborated (with opposed intentions?) in, among others, Michael Fischer, *Does Deconstruction Make Any Difference?: Poststructuralism and the Defense of Poetry in Modern Criticism* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1985), esp. pp. 110-125; and Frank Lentricchia, *Criticism and Social Change* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983).

²⁰ In Georg Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness: Studies in Marxist Dialectics*, trans. Rodney Livingstone (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1971), pp. 1-26.

²¹ Rüdiger Bubner, *Modern German Philosophy*, trans. Eric Matthews (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), p. 154. Unfortunately, I have had access only to the titles of Bubner's German publications in preparing this article.

²² Cp. *ibid.*, p. 155.

²³ *Ibid.*, pp. 164-165.

²⁴ Prior to the hesitations expressed at the beginning of *The Quest*, Eliade had "summarily define[d]" religious life "as the experience of kratophanies, hierophanies, and theophanies" (*Patterns*, p. 126).

²⁵ For a vigorous and generally convincing statement of this position, see Wayne Proudfoot, *Religious Experience* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1986).

²⁶ Cf. the tenor of my article, " 'When men Revile You and Persecute You:' Advice, Conflict, and Grace in Shinran and Luther," *History of Relgions* 25, no. 2 (November 1985): 148-162.

²⁷ With the phrase "interpretation-explanation-interpretation" I am alluding to Paul Ricoeur's attempt to specify more exactly the process of interpretation in

a manner that also includes the moment of explanation. See his *Interpretation Theory*: *Discourse and the Surplus of Meaning* (Fort Worth, Tex.: Texas Christian University Press, 1976), esp. pp. 71-95. Despite the impressive expansiveness and profundity of Ricoeur's thought, his procedure here—and in so much of his treatment of the hermeneutical tradition—inevitably reminds me of Ptolemy's epicycles. For a programmatic assessment of the inadequacy of hermeneutics to deal with the literary product, see Jerome McGann, *The Romantic Ideology*: *A Critical Investigation* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1983), p. ix.

[28] Both Wach and Eliade have intellectual roots in movements that despised rhetoric and contributed to its decline. For example, Wach adopted and slightly modified a hermeneutics of *Erlebnis*, *Ausdruck*, and *Verstehen* that privileged, in opposition to the artificialities of rhetoric, the genius's pure expression of experience (cp. Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method* [New York: Seabury Press, 1975], p. 64). In Britain, the shift from rhetoric was vigorously announced by William Wordsworth in the epoch-making *Lyrical Ballads* that he published with S. T. Coleridge in 1798. There, Wordsworth stated programmatically that all truly good poetry—even that which appeared artificial, such as Thomas Gray's—rejected artifice (the hallmark of 18th century aesthetics) and utilized only "natural" language—a contention with which Coleridge himself later vehemently disagreed in his *Biographia Litteraria*. For the different course of the decline of rhetoric in France, see Gérard Genette, "Rhetoric Restrained," in *Figures of Literary Discourse* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), pp. 103-126.

[29] Other holistic traditions remain clearly within the boundaries of discourse. For a holistic twist on language analysis from a pragmatist position, see Richard Rorty, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1979); cp. his *Consequences of Pragmatism* (*Essays*: *1972-1980*) (Minneapolis, Minn.: University of Minnesota Press, 1982). For a current articulation of certain holistic themes from a rhetorical direction, see Hayden White, *Metahistory*: *The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973), and *Tropics of Discourse*: *Essays in Cultural Criticism* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978).

[30] Bubner, p. 155.

[31] Quirks of translation and of history make this statement look somewhat tautological. The term "history of relgions" became current in English and the Romance languages under the impact of positivistic critical history at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century: see A. Eustace Haydon, "From Comparative Religion to the History of Religions," *Journal of Religion* 2 (1922): 577-587. Some still promote essentially this sort of hsitory as the basic method of *Religionswissenschaft*, as in Kurt Rudolph's recent *Historical Fundamentals and the Study of Religions* (New York: MacMillan, 1985). As I use the term, however, "history of religions" is simply the rough English equivalent of the German *Religionswissenschaft*, a phrase preserved now—among other places in the "International Association for the History of Religions"—*pars pro toto* because the English term "science" has unfortunate connotations.

[32] Cf. my "Epic Persuasion: Religion and Rhetoric in the *Iliad* and Vālmīki's *Rāmāyaṇa*" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago, March 1986).

[33] Such a move has been particularly characteristic of the thought of Paul Ricoeur. See especially his "The Model of the Text: Meaningful Action Considered as a Text," in *Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences*: *Essays on Language, Action, and Interpretation*, trans. John B. Thompson (Cambridge: Cambridge University

Press, 1981), pp. 197-221. Discussing the issue of war and revolution, Lentricchia (n. 19) refers to his own writings as a social critique of the extreme view that "everything is a text, there is nothing outside the text" (p. 43). He alludes to a logical critique of this view in lectures given by Perry Anderson at Irvine, California, but I have not been able to locate any of these lectures in published form. The move poses problems to those in other human studies as well. In a recent book in art history, Michael Baxandall rejects the hermeneutical option in favor of an historical one (pp. vi-vii). He intentionally avoids the notion of "meaning" and the procedure that would address a painting as if it were a text in order to explore another way by which, consciously or not, we approach pictures (pp. 116-121). See his *Patterns of Intention: On the Historical Explanation of Pictures* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1985). (For a clear statement of these issues, see Svetlana Alpers's review of Baxandall in *The New Republic* (July 14 & 21, 1986), pp. 34-38, esp. 36.)

[34] Cp. Eliade's blatant admission in *Patterns*: "There is so little evidence that it is hard—and for our purpose scarcely necessary—to discover exactly how far the structure of any hierophany was first seen fully by all the members of a given society. All we need to do is specify what a hierophany *could mean* or could not mean" (p. 145, n. 1, *sic*).

[35] Cp. the recent article by Lawrence E. Sullivan, "Sound and Senses: Toward a Hermeneutics of Performance." *History of Religions* 26, no. 1 (August 1986): 1-33, which, however, still remains within the framework of hermeneutics.

[36] McGann, p. 48. Following Heinricht Heine, McGann prefers an approach that is analytical and critical. In this vein he critiques both hermeneutics and its deconstructive opposite: "thematic criticism sidesteps the concrete, human particulars of the originary works, either to reproduce them within currently acceptable ideological terms, or to translate them into currently unacceptable forms of thought. The latter maneuver—so frequent today—generally operates by reducing poetic works to a network of related themes and ideas—a condition of being which no artistic product can tolerate without loss of its soul." (p. 11) The similarities between McGann's views and my own preference for an historical and extraverted history of religions should be apparent.

[37] Hans Magnus Enzensberger, "In Praise if Illiteracy," *Grand Street* 5, no. 4 (Summer 1986): 88-96.

[38] A representative sampling might include: in anthropology, George Marcus and Michael M. G. Fischer, *Anthropology as Cultural Critique* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), with extensive discussion of the literature; in literary studies, works by Raymond Williams, Terry Eagleton, Fredric Jameson, as well as works by Frank Lentricchia and recent writings by Jerome McGann; and in archaeology, Daniel Miller and Christopher Tilley, ed., *Ideology, Power, and Prehistory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984). Kurt Rudolph made intriguing suggestions in this direction in "Die 'ideologiekritische' Funktion der Religionswissenschaft," *Numen* 25 (1978): 17-39; cp. his *Historical Fundamentals*, lecture 4: "The History of Religions and the Critique of Ideologies," pp. 59-77.

[39] I base my comments on a Saturday morning conversation in the summer of 1984. Discussing the kind of remarks on contributors that were needed to orient readers to the essays collected in Kitagawa's *The History of Religions: Retrospect and Prospect* (New York: Macmillan, 1985), we came eventually to talk at length about the course of Kitagawa's own career and the many projects he still wished to pursue.

⁴⁰ This sentence originally read: "that Kitagawa himself has never been per-
mitted to carry." Since then I have learned that in his retirement Kitagawa has
been able to resume this project, which has been delayed for so long. I do claim
inspiration from Kitagawa, but I would never wish to preempt his own work. As
we all will, I will follow Kitagawa's writings with great interest. I expect that he
has, as always, a great deal to teach us.

BOOK REVIEWS

BOOK SURVEY

Judaism

Christians, for their own good theological reasons, consider the O.T. to
be part of Christian history (or pre-history). A straight line leads from the
O.T. to the N.T. and from there to the Apostolic Age to the life of the
Church today. Judaism (as distinct from the religion of the O.T.) becomes
a blind side-alley. For the Jews the royal road goes from the O.T. to the
Talmud to the continuity of later Judaism, with Christianity branching
off the main road at a certain juncture. It is thus not intrinsically
illegitimate to treat O.T. themes, for once, under the heading *Judaica* viz.
the Religion of Israel.

The relationship of the O.T. to myth has been a subject of much
debate. In fact, many readers came to feel that little remained to be said.
Much, of course, depends on one's definition of myth and mythology. As
regards the contents of mythology, the points of reference for biblical
scholars usually were the near-eastern (i.e., Egyptian and Mesopotamian)
texts, and the bible was represented as a declaration of war on myth: it
was non-mythical, a-mythical, anti-mythical. A more sophisticated defini-
tion of myth (the "Bibel-Babel" school was anything but sophisticated)
found lots of mythological elements viz. traces in the O.T. (The N.T.
Entymythologisierungs-debate is a different chapter altogether). With the
discovery of the Ras Shamra texts the subject acquired a new lease of life.
Ugarit threw new light on many Psalms, on passages in Deutero-Isaiah
and Job, and much more. This could lead to a strengthening of myth-
ritual theories on the one hand and, on the other hand, to a plethora of
disquisitions on the relationship of "myth" and "history"—and the
steady flow continues. Some authors, in their enthusiasm, went to lengths
that seemed designed to lead the whole theory *ad absurdum*. Others fought
theological rearguard battles. Many of us began to lose interest in the sub-
ject after J. Hempel's *Glaube Mythos u. Geschichte im A.T.* (1953). But the
industry is blithely continuing, also in theological literature (cf. e.g., W.
Pannenberg, *Christentum und Mythos*). One of the most recent instalments
is C. Petersen.[1] The subject of his book (originally a Ph.D. thesis) is the
mythical element in the Psalms, and hence each Psalm exhibiting
"mythical elements" receives a separate chapter. But in order to cir-

cumscribe its subject-matter, the study opens with a long introductory excursus on "myth" (pp. 1-55) which, however, is "Biblical Studies" oriented and hence no philosophical (e.g. Cassirer) or anthropological (Malinowski, Lévi-Strauss) works are cited or used. If the book does not greatly further our understanding of myth, it at least gives a competent exposition of the state of knowledge regarding near-eastern mythological motifs in the Psalms.

The O.T. Apocrypha have for a long time, and with good reason, been highly regarded as a significant, if not the most significant, source-material helping to fill the blank called the "intertestamentary" period, as a guide to the origins of Jewish apocalypticism and mysticism, and as a reflection of the mosaic-like diversity of the Judaism of the period. German readers used Kautzsch, English readers used Charles who also bequeatehed to us the Siamese twins "Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha". Though the latter distinction is not devoid of good sense. Prof. Sparks has chosen to call his handy collection, now also in paperback,[2] *The Apocryphal Old Testament*, although its contents covers essentially (though not exclusively) Charles's vol. 2. In fact this volume of "apocryphal" literature uses as its criterion for inclusion the pseudepigraphic character of a work even if a "reputable Jewish pedigree" cannot always be established. Hence the Sybilline oracles and other well-known items (such as e.g., Ahikar and Aristeas) have been dropped. The various texts, some better and some less well-known (Jubileees, sundry Apocalypses and "testaments", Enoch), have each been translated, annotated and provided with excellent bibliographies by the best experts. Prof. Sparks's introduction gives a succinct and lucid account of both the general and the special problems involved in the production of a "revised Charles". Readers now have a handy and reliable companion to James's *The Apocryphal New Testament* within easy reach.

Re-writing viz. re-editing great but antiquated classics is a daunting job, as the preceding paragraph has illustrated. One of these monumental and awe-inspiring classics was "the" Schürer, first published over a century ago and as ever indispensable. Our generation did not produce another Schürer, so Geza Vermes and his collaborators hit on the splendid idea of producing an English version,[3] completely revised and updated (which means taking into account new archeological, numismatic and textual—including the Quamran documents and Bar Kokhba letters—finds as well as modern text-critical work), including updated bibliographies. This *maximum opus* to which no words of praise can do justice, has now been brought to completion with the publication of Pt. 2 of vol. 3. The latter volume had to be divided into two parts so as not to become too bulky, and it contains in addition to the discussion of sun-

dry apocryphal viz. ''pseudepigraphical'' texts as well as of Philo also indexes (main index, Greek Word List, Hebrew and Aramaic Word List). Thanks to the splendid work of Dr Vermes and his team, we can all come, unlike Mark Antony, to praise Schürer, not to bury him.

From the history of the Jewish people in the age of jesus one quite naturally comes to Jesus. The late prof. Brandon revived and vigorously defended the thesis that Jesus was a revolutionary activist and anti-Roman zealot. The thesis has won few adherents, but the discussion helped to highlight many new aspects (also in connection with renewed interests in the zealots due to the Masada excavations). Altogether the problem of the attitude of jesus to the politics of his day is one that still holds the interest of students. The volume edited by Bammel and Moule[4] does not proclaim any new or revolutionary message, but it does shed a great deal of light on the problem, especially as the twenty-six contributions (seven by one of the editors himself) succeed in presenting a balanced picture not only of the Jewish, Judaean as well as Roman (especially roman legal and judicial administration in the provinces) background, but also of the history of scholarship on that particular subject. No one, including specialists in the period, can read the book without gaining new insights.

W. Fricke's *Prozess Jesu*[5] is a puzzling book. The author is a lawyer by profession, and in this respect a colleague of Israeli Supreme Court Justice Mr Haim Cohen who also wrote a book on the trial of Jezus. Like Cohen's, also Fricke's arguments are those of a lawyer and hence often carry very little conviction for the historian. The author wants to contribute to the noble aim of better Jewish-Christian understanding by ''proving'' that Jesus was condemned not by the Jews for blasphemy (hardly a new insight!) but as a revolutionary by the Romans—due to a ''judicial error''. Instead of criticising the book in detail, let us characterise it by merely noting that the most important modern work on the subject of the trial of Jesus (Paul Winter, who is referred to over twenty times by Bammel-Moule) is not mentioned even once in Fricke's text, index or bibliography. P. Lapide, on the other hand, is frequently mentioned. (Bammel-Moule mention Lapide once only in a footnote, but in view of the excellence of their book this lapsus should be charitably forgiven).

Jesus taught by means of parables. His parables are of interest to literary historians and critics interested in this *genre littéraire*, not to speak of theologians and N.T. scholars (cf. also W. Harnisch, *Die Gleichniserzählungen Jesu: eine hermeneutische Einführung*). Parables are also a major feature of ancient rabbinic preaching, but here N.T. scholars exhibit the usual conditioned reflexes: the rabbinic material is late and hence irrele-

vant to the N.T. Moreover "rabbinic material" means—to most of them—what can be found not in the Talmud or *midrashim* but in Strack-Billerbeck. David Flusser's work[6] (vol. 4 in the series *Judaica et Christiana* edited by Cl. Thoma and S. Lauer of the Faculty of Catholic Theology in the University of Lucerne) is therefore of the greatest significance and compels (at least those who have ears) to hear. The author's immense familiarity with the whole range of ancient rabbinic literature enables him to place the Jewish Jesus in his native context in a way in which even a J. Jeremias and his like could not. One reader at least was slightly puzzled to find Flusser taking the story of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:29-37) as it is given in the *textus receptus* instead of guessing at what is probably the original version. The wounded man on the road was a Samaritan and those succesively passing by were the standard Jewish trio: priest, levite and ordinary Israelite. The latter, in accordance with the general ideology of Jesus, was morally superior to the first two and assisted the stricken Samaritan.

It would be an insult to the readers of this journal as well as to the memory of the late Marcel Simon (see Obituary in NUMEN XXXIV (1987):139-42 to "review" *Verus Israel*[7] at this hour of the day. There is no doubt that in spite of Simon's considerable scholarly output, *Verus Israel* (2nd updated ed. 1964) will remain his *chef d'œuvre*. But in obedience to the rule *gallica sunt: non leguntur*, this seminal work was as good as non-existent for English and American students. The "Littman Library of Jewish-Christian Civilization" is to be congratulated for having produced an English translation of the French text. Considering the ignorance of our age, the many Greek and Latin, and occasional Hebrew, quotations should have been translated *in* the text and the original given in an appendix instead of the other way round. Or perhaps they should not have been translated at all since many of the translations (even of German quotations) are simply wrong! It is a pity that the publishers could not, or did not bother to, find a competent graduate student to bring the work and the bibliography up-to-date. Readers who have some French are advised to reach for the 1964 ed.

The title *Judaism in Society*[8] could be extremely misleading were it not for the subtitle. (Perhaps the two should have been reversed, for is not every religious code intended for people living "in society"?). The second subtitle (!) is arrant nonsense, especially if one realises that (and how!) the term "natural history of religion" has been used since the 19th cent. Neusner's total *œuvre* suffers from overproduction, and like most of Neusner's books this one too is heavily overwritten. Commonplaces are proclaimed as if they were the discovery of America and the treatment and organisation of the material, in spite of occasional brilliant Neusnerian

formulations, is often confusing. Altogether less would have been more, but conciseness and lucidity have never been outstanding qualities of Neusner's voluminous production. After the highlights of *Purities* vol. 21 and *Qodashim* vol. 6, this study is a bit of an anticlimax. Still, readers with a good wind and sufficient determination will feel rewarded. There are plenty of acute observations and penetrating analyses. The author's ambitious aim is to do for the *Yerushalmi* (the Palestinian Talmud) what he had done earlier for the Mishnah, and he directs his formidable artillery of erudition and methodological originality on precisely that Talmud that has been less thoroughly studied, is in many ways far more difficult, and reflects the situation and the needs of survival of a harassed and decimated Palestinian Jewry. Neusner's competence in handling *Yerushalmi* texts has come in for killing criticism. Yet this should not be taken as an excuse for ignoring the present book, especially as Neusner, as a talmudist-historian, can do for the period what the archeologist-historian Avi-Yonah could not do. Those who want to contest Neusner's thesis that the Talmud "speaks with one voice" only and that the *Yerushalmi* represents the reworking of everything there was of traditional material "into a single, stunningly cogent document" by the Sages who knew what they wanted to do and did it, may well do so but they will have to go beyond mere contradictory assertions and must marshall more erudition and more convincing analyses of the evidence than the author has exhibited.

The relationship of the chosen people to its "promised land" has been the subject of ever so many studies and publications. No doubt Zionism and the State of Israel provided, at least for Jewish scholars, what sociologists would call *Leitinteresse*. Among more recent publications the Jerusalem-Göttingen Symposium Volume *Das Land Israel in biblischer Zeit* (Göttingen 1983, ed. G. Strecker), W. D. Davies's, *The Territorial Dimension of Judaism* (1982), the writings of R. Rendtorff, F. W. Marquardt and M. Weinfeld, but above all M. Buber's *Israel and Palestine: The History of an Idea* (1952) should not go unmentioned. But whereas the biblical period on the one end, and the later (rabbinic, medieval, kabbalistic and modern) literature on the other end have been amply studied, the Hasmonean era, one of the most dramatic in Jewish history, has been relatively neglected. Dr Mendels's study[9] fills a real lacuna. It appears that there was a vision of a "Greater Palestine", but even before the loss of independence the actual attitutde was pragmatic not only as regards territorial ambitions but also as regards the continued presence of foreign nations ("Gentiles"). The novelty of the study does not consist in the commonplace assertion that the past is always pressed into the service of

the present, but in the meticulous description of how this standard pro-
cedure was applied during the Hasmonean period.

Jewish mysticism is increasingly becoming a popular subject, almost a
fad. Prof. N. A. van Uchelen's *Merkawa*[10] (in Dutch) is a popular intro-
duction to the first phase in the recorded history of Jewish mysticism: the
mystical, visionary extatic "descent" (really ascent) to the divine throne
(*Merkawah*). The author gives us a summing up of the views made current
by ch. 2 of Scholem's *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism* and subsequent
publications. Merkabah research is currently gaining momentum and
undergoing thorough re-examination. Merkabah mysticism may before
long require thorough re-definition and the author will, no doubt, sooner
or later produce a revised version of *Merkawa*.

Several mammoth undertakings on the "spirituality of the world" are
upon us. So far only two volumes, both concerned with Judaism (vols. 13
and 14 of a projected 25-volume series on *World Spirituality*: *An Encyclopedic
History of the Religious Quest*) have reached this reviewer's desk.[11] Both
volumes are well organised and excellently executed. Pt.i of vol. 13 has
six chapters taking us from the biblical (near-eastern) background via the
Temple to the Bible itself, the O.T. prophets, Psalms and apocalyptic.
Pt.ii has five chapters on hellenistic Judaism, the rabbinic age and the
Talmud, and the early forms of Jewish mysticism known as *merkabah* (see
above), whilst Pt.iii takes us to medieval piety: the commentaries on the
sacred texts, Ashkenazic pietism and the beginnings of the Kabbalah.
Vol. 14 continues the history of the Kabbalah (the "Safed Revival",
Lurianism) and the Hasidic movement. Pt.2 deals, in five chapters with
"the modern age". A. Eisen's chapter on "secularization, "spirit", and
the Strategies of Modern Jewish Faith" is a particularly noteworthy con-
tribution. Altogether two beautiful volumes exhibiting *haute vulgarisation* at
its best.

The Classics of Western Spirituality series (unlike the previously mentioned
one) will not deliver historical surveys but selected illustrative texts. The
volume under review[12] deals with the "early Kabbalah" i.e., more or less
the period covered by G. Scholem's *The Origins of the Kabbalah* (1987). The
excellent introduction by he editor (pp. 1-41) is followed by an anthology
of texts from the *Iyyun*-circle, the *Bahir*, the outstanding kabbalistic
luminaries of the Provence and the Gerona-circle, and by the two brothers
Jacob and Isaac ha-Kohen. At last kabbalistic literature is becoming
accessible also to non-herbraists in reliable and scientifically respectable
versions.

The late Joseph Weiss, Professor of Judaic Studies at University Col-
lege, London, was one of the finest and most profound students in our
generation of the spiritual movement in the late 18th and early 19th cent.

Eastern Europe known as Hasidism. His tragic death in 1969 robbed hasidic research of one of its best and most sensitive and original minds. Many of his writings are in Hebrew and not translated into western languages. But Weiss also published in English (in some cases he translated his own Hebrew) and in one instance in German (the essay appears in the present volume in English translation). The 16 studies assembled in this volume[13] are searching and profound explorations of the socio-spiritual background of Hasidism and of the teachings (including the religious, spiritual and mystical problems giving rise to these teachings) of some of early Hasidism's outstanding masters. The Editor and the Littman Library have deserved well of all students of mysticism in general and of Hasidism in particular.

Historians of religion can note with satisfaction the tendency to produce more and more textual anthologies, enabling students to contact—albeit through the dark glass of translation only—the sources of a religion. The series reviewed in NUMEN XXVI (1979):250 f. did just that: every descriptive volume on a particular religion was accompanied by a "Reader". Dr John Hinnels, well-known as an *iranisant*, is now editing a series of *Textual Sources for the Study of Religions*. The volume on Judaism,[14] edited and translated by Ph. S. Alexander, is well organised and well translated; it covers scriptures and tradition, liturgy, tales of saints and scholars, law, ethical literature, philosophical, theological and mystical texts as well as modern (theological, social and political) thought. No book on Judaism is complete without at least one chapter on antisemitic legislation and persecution, and the editor provides that too—including the infamous decrees of the Fourth Lateran Council and a few Holocaust Documents. The volume can be unhesitatingly recommended to the undergraduate student for whom it is intended.

Is antisemitism a subject for historians of religion or for social historians? In the case of Christian antisemitism the question is hardly in doubt (cf. the studies by Gager and Wilken reviewed in NUMEN xxxii, 1985:287-9, Simon's *Verus Israel* (see above) and Schachar's study of the *Judensau* reviewed in NUMEN xxxiv, 1987:271-2), and the literature produced by Polemicists on both sides of the fence is enormous. Enormous but inadequate, in spite of some useful surveys (Parkes, Maurer) and monographs (e.g., H. Oberman on Luther). Lukyn Williams's classic *Adversus Judaeos* is sadly inadequate because that fine scholar lacked sufficient acquaintance with medieval Hebrew. Dr H. Maccoby, already well-known for other publications, has given us an excellent albeit very focussed work.[15] His theme are the three major, one might almost say classic, late medieval disputations (Paris 1240, Barcelona 1263, Tortosa 1413-4). Not all the information given by the author is staggeringly new

or surprising, but one is grateful for the translated texts (although also
other translations have recently been published), especially as the author
is not afraid of suggesting convincing textual emendations, as well as for
the sensible analyses of the respective historical backgrounds. Altogether
another feather in the hat of the The Littman Library of Jewish
Civilization.

There is no reason to fear that historical research into antisemitism will
find itself out of work. After all, practically every important figure in
Christian history can be interrogated on the subject: John Chrysostom,
Bernard of Clairvaux, St. Thomas, Luther etc. Erasmus, the
paradigmatic ''humanist'' is surely a fit subject. *Communis opinio* has it
that he was a great Christian humanist but not a social, intellectual or
theological revolutionary. Hence he was also antisemitic (though not in
a virulent way, to be sure) like every other good Christian. Dr Shimon
Markish[16] (writing in Russian but having an excellent English translator)
argues that the ''accusation'' cannot be sustained and is rather due to our
conditioned reflex of asking modern questions of a 16th cent. man.
''Asemitism'' rather than ''antisemtism'' would be a better word. A
stimulating and important study, the value of which is enhanced by the
fact that it contains a sensitive and well-argued ''afterword'' (pp. 144-
154) by the late Arthur A. Cohen whom the author invited to take issue
with the book's thesis—which Cohen did with considerable vigour and
cogency.

Arthur Cohen, together with Prof. P. Mendes-Flohr, have edited an
extremely useful and valuable volume on Contemporary Jewish Relgious
Thought.[17] The contributors are over a hundred Jewish thinkers and
scholars from the whole spectrum of orthodox to secularist. The volume
is arranged, encyclopaedia-like, in alphabetical order from
AESTHETICS, AGGADAH and ANTI-JUDAISM (viz. anti-semitism)
to WOMEN, WORK and ZIONISM. The latter has 8 pp., IMAGINA-
TION has 22 (!), whereas IMAGO DEI has 6 only. This is not meant as
a criticism but as an illustration of what might be called a ''modern''
approach, for which much theology, the ways one envisages suffering and
salvation, as well as the hermeneutics and interpretation of sacred texts
and prophecy, are all a function of ''imagination''. The artt. were shared
out among authors who had previously written on ''their'' subjects and
who could therefore be presumed to possess some competence. It is the
best reference-work to date on contemporary Jewish beliefs, concepts and
movements.

Islam

Islamic studies, like all religious studies, are undergoing profound transformations, some for good and some for bad reasons. The latter shall not detain us here, as little as the antics performed by some western-educated writers whose oriental pedigree entitles them (in their view) to odd perrformances of which E. Said's scurrilous *Orientalism* is merely a symptom, of interest to the social pathologist rather than to orientalists proper. Western Islamicists, for their part, tend to fall prey to post-colonialist bad conscience, a rebound-phenomenon best described in history-of-religions language as modern academic neo-flagellantism. But passing fads should not make us forget that Islam always has been, and still is, a worthy subject of study for its own sake. In an age of growing importance of Islamic countries, of renewed Islamic self-awareness (in part on the rebound from a history of humilation, and of western arrogance and superiority-complexes), and of an Islamic resurgence that at least in some of its manifestations does not necessarily evoke sympathy or admiration, scholarship is faced with new substantive and methodological problems and challenges. On a less scholarly level, the increasing number of Muslims in western societies renders an under-standing of Islam in schools and on the ordinary civic level a social imperative.

P. Schwarzenau[18] tries to overcome the traditional Christian sense of cultural strangeness and theological prejudice regarding the Qur'an (though his diagnosis of a "secret fear" seems a wild and unsubstantiated exaggeration) by making this Holy Scripture accessible, in a relatively ecumenical spirit, to Christian readers. In terms of western history (central and east Asian Islam is rather neglected), Islam was certainly the last powerful religious movement. The impetus which Arab philosophy (rather than the Qur'an!) gave to the West and to the development of rational thought is no doubt tremendous though one may well entertain doubts concerning the popularity of Ibn al-Arabi or of Averroes in the Muslim world of today. Let us not forget that only a few years ago the Egyptian (!—not Saudi or Iranian) parliament seriously and solemnly debated whether it was permissible to print and read ibn al-Arabi! The assertions that the Qur'an is the "first modern book" and that the Islam based on it gave a powerful impulse to the emergence of the modern Occi-dent, border on the ridiculous. But the book is certainly a valiant attempt to redress a lop-sided balance.

Klaus Hock's publication[19] does not intend to contribute to our under-standing of Islam; it is a Christian theological evaluation of the latter. This judgment holds true although the book also reviews writings of

scholars noted for their profound knowledge of, and empathy with, Islam (Kenneth Cragg, W. C. Smith). Many of the chapter-headings and for-mulations of themes have a slightly negative flavour (e.g. ''The Christian answer: Mission to Muslims'', the ''uniqueness of Christianity'', ''Spiritual values in Islam?''—please note the question-mark, ''the false credentials of Islam''). Perhaps these are meant to report on past attitudes and not to reflect current positions—this at least is what this reviewer hopes. In the end the author escapes from an ecumenical *Auseinandersetzung* with Islam proper into a Christian ''theology of religions'' and into a discussion of what the *kerygma* can mean in that context. The reviewer apologises for discussing this book under the heading of Islam instead of in the section on Christianity.

It is with a huge sigh of relief that one turns to the volume edited by R. C. Martin.[20] Here we have the new look in religious studies at its best. Of the 12 chapters (the editor's fine introductory essay, chapters on Scrip-ture and the Prophet, Ritual and Community, Religion and Society, Scholarship and Interpretation, Challenge and Criticism plus a list of reference material and plentiful notes) are not all of equally wide and general interest (e.g. Ch. Adam's very good chapter on the hermeneutics of Henri Corbin or Aziz Nanji's piece on the Ismailiya), but they are all of equally good quality. There is no obsession with ''Islam and the West'' (cf. R. M. Eaton's chapter on Conversion to Islam in India). Marilyn Waldman's essay has implications far beyond Muslim Studies in the nar-row sense, and the last two chapters ''Outsiders' Interpretations of Islam: A Muslim point of view'' (Muhammad Abdul-Rauf) and ''Approaches to Islam in Religious Studies: A Review Essay'' (Fazlur Rahman) conclude the book not with a whimper but with a bang. A ''must'' also for non— Islamicist students of religion.

Al-Ghazzali's *Ihya* is such a monumental work that generations of Ph.D. students and others find an honourable occupation in translating ''books'' i.e., parts of it for the benefit of non-Arabists. Thus about 15 years ago a Japanese scholar published a translation of Ghazzali's book ''On Prayer''. German, English and other language translations of parts of the *Ihya* abound. M. A. Qasem of the National University of Malaysia in Selangor has presented an English translation, with copious and learned notes, of Ghazzali on the recitation and interpretation of the Qur'an (i.e., Book VIII of the *Ihya*).[21] This is an unequivocally theological publication. But since theology is part of the raw-material with which the historian of religion works, the latter too will greatly benefit.

Ernest Gellner is not only a student (belonging to the anthropological denomination) of North African Islam, but also a sociologist, political scientist and philosopher. All these branches of study are, almost by

definition, bound to benefit from a book edited by him. The book under review[22] is no exception, although not all 12 contributions are of equal sophistication and not all are quite new, having appeared in earlier drafts on other occasions. The volume as a whole is so dense and (in part) sophisticated as to defy a brief review. Of course no contributor could possibly beat the sophistication of the editor's Introduction. In kepping with the editor's specialisation, the subtitle "The southern shore of the mediterranean" aptly describes the scope of the volume. The reader should not expect discussions of Iraq and Iran, let alone of Pakistan, India, Bangladesh or Malaysia. There are chapters on pilgrimages—both of tribal Bedouins in the Sinai and in connection with Tunisian cults of saints; Puritanism (on an island off Tunisia), the discrediting of a Sufi movement in Tunisia, and an analysis of the "trajectories of contemporary Sufism" (an Egyptian case study). Of more basic importance are J. Waardenburg on "Islam as a Vehicle of Protest", Turner on an "Economic Model of Virtuoso Religion", J. M. Abun-Nasr on "Militant Islam: A Historical Perspective", and H. Hanafi on "The Origin of Modern Conservatism and Islamic Fundamentlism". Though the volume is disappointingly short (in view of the promise contained in the title) on Industrialisation, it is nevertheless one of the more laudable items in the Mouton series *Religion and Society* (vol. 25).

Hanafi's chapter in the Gellner volume already supplied this survey with the cue "Muslim Fundamentalism". The late V. S. Naipaul wrote a deeply moving, because open-minded and open-hearted, albeit knowingly journalistic, account[23] of his journey among the "believers"—not on the mediterranean shores but in Iran and further east: Pakistan, Malaysia, Indonesia. He met leaders, scholars (of the medieval type), "hanging judges" as well as other types of Ayatollahs, journalists, lawyers, doctors, teachers, ordinary young men and women—all trying to find anchor in a disoriented and disorienting world, and ardently believing that this anchor is to be found in the regaining of the purity of their pristine faith. There is no cheap irony in Naipaul's account. He likes (most of) the people he met and their desire for the realisation of an ideal. Instead of sarcasm there is sadness at the realisation that in spite of their earnest faith they are farther removed than ever from any realistic solution of their cultural, political and economic problems. In an "unstructured" village school in Java Naipaul heard the kids shouting "Illich, Illich". But neither de-schooling society nor any other miraculous panacea (and religious fanaticism is one of them) will bring them any nearer to their goal. Naipaul gives us an honest, generous, almost loving and therefore all the more saddening insight into Islamic society, an insight the lucidity of which is not invalidated by the apparently more sophisticated

menuettos danced by the professional empathisers mixing "under-
standing" with "ecumenicism".

Gudmar Aneer's study[24] of the Iranian religious traditions shared, all
appearances to the contrary, by Khomeiny and the late Shah whose
detested régime he overthrew, takes up an important and interesting
theme. The main thesis seems to be correct although the elaboration is
inadequate and in some ways immature. Altogether the book gives the
impression of a Ph.D. thesis (though this impression may be incorrect)
that should have been allowed to mature in cask for a couple of years
before being re-written and published. One is reminded of the many
publications arguing the persistence of traditional Chinese values also in
and after Mao's cultural revolution. The basic thesis begins with ancient
Iranian kingship ideology and its subsequent islamisation. (The author
deals with ideological factors only; as a matter of fact there is also con-
tinuity in the concrete symbols of royalty, as S. Shaked has shown in his
instructive article "From Iran to Islam: On some symbols of royalty",
1986). To these elements specific shi'ite (imamite) as well as Sufi beliefs
should be added. According to the author these strands became com-
pletely intertwined in the 16th cent. (Shah Isma'il I), and they go a long
way towards explaining a number of striking similarities in the ideas held
and expressed by the late Shah and by Imam Khomeiny. A number of
colour-plates illustrate the author's argument, precisely because they are
no great art but expressive of the popular values conveyed by sloganeering
propaganda art.

Ujamaa, the official national ideology of Tanzania's rulers is certainly
not a religious let alone Muslim concept. On the contrary, its relation to
dini is the subject of D. Westerlund's study[25] (based on fieldwork) which
deals with the period 1961-77. As a "civil religion" designed to bolster
national integration it had to deal with extant religious realities (Muslims,
Christians, and ATRs where witchcraft still played a dominant role).
Diverse, if sometimes contradictory, policies were mobilised. The African
Sunni Muslims were influential in the implementation of the *ujamaa* pro-
gramme, though the message to them was "don't mix politics with
religion". Nevertheless Islamic religious elements were effectively
harnessed to the effort. On this subject the author makes some
illuminating comparisons with Nasser's Arab socialism. Christians were
enrolled under the "play your part" motto. Both made common front
against what they perceived as the danger of traditional African supersti-
tions (especially witchcraft beliefs). The story takes us to 1977 only
because in that year TANU was dissolved and merged with ASP to form
the "Revolutionary Party".

W. C. Smith is one of the great names in contemporary religious studies—whether for purposes of admiration, agreement, or criticism and polemics. His influence on religious studies tends to overshadow his eminence as an Islamicist. The volume *On Understanding Islam*[26] hardly requires a review. Of the 16 papers collected in the volume only 3 have not been published before, eight have been published in the West and are thus known to most readers. Some have been published several times before in different collections, but one is glad to have this handy volume of "selected studies". They show W. C. Smith at his best, with all the different hats he is wearing: Islamicist, Historian of Religion, Comparative Religionist, Philosopher of Religion, Theologian and Ecumenicist (cf. the concluding essay dating from 1963). And the more one reads Smith the more one realises that the apparently different hats are (at least on his head) really one hat only.

Corrigenda

Two statements in recent book-surveys call for corrections. In NUMEN xxxiii (1986), p. 244, this reviewer wrongly asserted that W. C. Smith, in his *Faith and Belief*, failed to mention M. Buber's similar distinction in *Two Types of Faith*. Oversights of this kind are not only lamentable but inexcusable, as is also this reviewer's habit of reading a text but occasionally skipping some of the notes. In an article published some months ago I corrected this lapsus by writing: "Smith has a brief but perceptive comparison of his own approach with that of Buber in his *Faith and Belief*, pp. 325-6 (n. 65)". But since the original false statement appeared in NUMEN, a correction should appear in the same journal. The correspondent who thought it necessary to draw my attention to this howler also paid me the compliment of qualifying all my interpretations and assessments with the blanket epithet "superficial". I consider this a compliment, for if I were able to pray (which, in the company of many other historians of religion, I am unable to do) I would undoubtedly pray that on the day of the Last Judgment I may be counted among the superficial goats and not among the profound, religiously empathising pseudo-theological sheep.

In NUMEN xxxiv (1987), p. 268 I stated that H. Zimmer (1890-1943) was known to American readers only through the English version of his *Philosophies of India*. This is a blatant error. Zimmer (whose wife was half-Jewish) had to leave Germany and arrived in the U.S. in 1941 where he soon became thoroughly "americanised" (signing his name Henry R. Zimmer). His american career was greatly abetted by his friend and admirer Joseph Cambell, and the result were several (posthumous)

English volumes, all edited by J. Campbell and published in the Bollingen series. The whole Zimmer story can be found in William McGuire's *Bollingen* (1982).

Addendum

NUMEN xxxiv (1987), pp. 121-2 reviewed the first two volumes of Walter Strolz's *Heilswege der Weltreligionen*. This work is now complete with the publication of vol 3[27] containing selected texts from the "sources" (i.e. more than the "scriptures" in the narrow sense) of the religions concerned. These texts are therefore more than a mere anthology: they are an essential part of the discussion in vols. 1 and 2. The very subtle prefatory essay to the volume deals deals with what is basically a problem of the philosophy rather than the history of religion: the difference between an alleged unity of the "essence" of religion on the one hand, and "unity in distinction" on the other.

                                                                    RJZW

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[2] H. F. D. Sparks (ed.), *The Apocryphal Old Testament* (Oxford, Clarendon Press), 1984, pp. xxxii + 990, ISBN 0-19-826177-2.

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[4] Ernst Bammel & C. F. D. Moule, *Jesus and the Politics of his Day* (Cambridge, Cambridge Univ. Press), 1985, pp. xi + 511, Cambridge paperback, £ 12.50. ISBN 0-521-31344-9.

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[8] Jacob Neusner, *Judaism in Society: The Evidence of the Yerushalmi. Toward the Natural History of a Religion*. (Chicago, Univ. of Chicago Press), 1983, pp. xxiv + 270, $ 32.50. £ 21.25. ISBN 0-226-57616-7.

⁹ Doron Mendels, *The Land of Israel as a Political Concept in Hasmonean Literature* (Tübingen, Mohr (Siebeck)), vol. 15 in the series "Texte and Studien zum Antiken Judentum", pp. x + 181. ISBN 3-16-145147-3.

¹⁰ N. A. van Uchelen, *Joodse Mystiek: Merkawa, Tempel en Troon* (Amsterdam Amphora Books), 1983, pp. 134, ISBN 90-6446-061-2.

¹¹ Arthur Green (ed.), *Jewish Spirituality: from the Bible to the Middle Ages*, pp. xxv + 450, ISBN 0-8245-0762-2. *Jewish Spirituality: From the Sixteenth Century Revival to the Present*, pp. xvii + 447, ISBN 0-8245-0763-0. Volumes 13 and 14 in the series "World Spirituality" (New York, Crossroad), hardcover.

¹² Joseph Dan (ed.), *The Early Kabbalah*. Texts transl. by Ronald C. Kiener. Preface by Moshe Idel (New York, Paulist Press), pp. xiii + 205. ISBN 0-8091-2769-5 (paper) and 0-8091-0373-7 (cloth).

¹³ Joseph Weiss, *Studies in Eastern European Jewish Mysticism*, ed. by David Goldstein (Oxford Univ. Press for the Littman Library), 1985, pp. viii + 272, £ 18.— ISBN 0-19-710034-1.

¹⁴ Philip S. Alexander, *Judaism*, (Manchester Univ. Press, in the series Textual Sources for the Study of Religion, ed. by John Hinnels), 1984, pp. 198, ISBN 0-7190-14980-0 (paperback).

¹⁵ Hyam Maccoby (ed. and transl.), *Judaism on Trial: Jewish-Christian Disputations in the Middle-Ages*, (East Brunswick – London – Toronto, Assoc. Univ. Presses for the Littman Library, distrib. by Oxford Univ. Press), 1982 pp. 245, L17.50 ISBN 0-19-710046-5.

¹⁶ Şhimon Markish, *Erasmus and the Jews*, transl. by Anthony Olcott, with an Afterword by Arthur A. Cohen (Chicago, Chicago Univ. Press), 1986, pp. viii + 203, $ 28.75 ISBN 0-226-50590-1.

¹⁷ Arthur A. Cohen & P. Mendes-Flohr (edd.), *Contemporary Jewish Religious Thought: Original Essays on critical concepts, movements and beliefs* (New York, Scribners), 1987, pp. xix + 1163, $ 75.—, ISBN 0-684-18628-4.

¹⁸ Paul Schwarzenau, *Korankunde für Christen: Ein Zugang zum heiligen Buch der Moslems* (Berlin-Stuttgart, Kreuz Verlag), 1982, pp. 133, ISBN 3-7831-0680-X.

¹⁹ Klaus Hock, *Der Islam im Spiegel westlicher Theologie: Aspekte christlich-theologischer Beurteilung des Islams im 20. Jahrhundert*. (Köln, Bohlau Verlag) Kölner Veroffentlichungen z. Religionsgeschichte Bd. 8, pp. 403, paperback, ISBN 3-412-00286-0.

²⁰ Richard C. Martin (ed.), *Approaches to Islam in Religious Studies*, (Tucson, Arizona, Arizona Univ. Press), pp. xiii + 243, cloth $ 18.95, ISBN 0-8165-0868-2.

²¹ Muhammad Abdul Qasem, *The Recitation and Interpretation of the Qur'an: Al-Ghazzali's Theory* (London, Kegan Paul International), pp. 121, paperback, £ 3.95. ISBN 0-7103-0035-2.

²² Ernest Gellner (ed.), *Islamic Dilemmas: Reformers, Nationalists and Industrialisation: The Southern Shore of the Mediterranean* (Berlin-New York-Amsterdam, Mouton), 1985, pp. viii + 319, cloth DM. 120.—, ISBN 3-11-009763-X.

²³ V. S. Naipaul, *Among the Believers: An Islamic Journey* (London, Andre Deutsch), pp. 399, £ 7.95, ISBN 0-233-97416-4.

²⁴ Gudmar Aneer, *Imam Ruhullah Khumeini, Šah Muhammad Riza Pahlavi and the Religious Tradition of Iran* (Uppsala, distr. by Almquist & Wiksell International, Stockholm), Acta Univ. Upsaliensis, Hist. Religionum, vol. 8, 1985, pp. 93 + 7 plates. Sw.Kr. 100. ISBN 91-554-1802-3.

¹⁴ David Westerlund, *Ujamaa na Dini: A Study of Some Aspects of Society and Religion in Tanzania 1961-1977* (Stockholm, Almquist & Wiksell), Stockholm Studies in Comparative Religion, vol. 18, pp. 198, ISBN 91-22-00348-3.
²⁶ Wilfred Cantwell Smith, *On Understanding Islam: Selected Studies* (The Hague, Mouton), Religion and Reason series no. 19, 1981, pp. xii + 351.
²⁷ Walter Strolz, *Heilswege der Weltreligionen*, Bd. 3, Quellentexte zu Judentum, Christentum, Islam, Hinduismus, Buddhismus und Taoismus (Freiburg i. Br., Herder) 1987, pp. 285. ISBN 3-451-2076-8.

THOMA, Clemens and Michael WYSCHOGROD (editors), *Understanding Scripture: Exploration of Jewish and Christian Traditions of Interpretation—* New York [and] Mahwah [New Jersey], Paulist Press, 1987, viii + 167 pp.

The editors of this collection ascribe its origin to their dissatisfaction with the political tone of previous Catholic (Vatican)-Jewish conversations, and their conviction that scholars and thinkers of the two faith communities had what to learn from each other in common study of their religious heritages, based as both are on the same sacred book. Under the sponsorship of the Institute for Jewish-Christian relations of the American Jewish Congress (of which Wyschogrod is director) and the Institute for Jewish-Christian Research of the Catholic Theological Faculty of Luzern, Switzerland (of which Thoma is director), a symposium was held in Luzern in January, 1984, which generated these papers. The topic declared was "The authority and interpretation of Scripture in Judaism and Christianity"; five of the contributors are Jews, five are Catholic.

It is symptomatic of the state of affairs in the respective faith communities that all the Catholic participants are officers of church institutions (priests and/or teachers in theological seminaries), while none of the Jews (though they may be observant) are employed by Jewish theological institutions. Jewish seminaries are not today seedbeds of modern theological thought; such thought is a private pursuit of Jewish professors of Bible, Medieval studies, philosophy at universities. The asymmetry of the papers in the volume reflects this condition.

The collection is divided into four sections in each of which contributors of both parties appear: "Tradition and inspiration in Scripture," "Exegetical traditions," "Medieval hermeneutics," and "Scripture as literature;" save for the last, these titles are insignificant of the character of the papers gathered under them. The first three Catholic papers (by Bishop Jorge Mejia; Prrofessor Walter Kirchschläger of the Catholic Theological Faculty, Luzern; Maurice Gilbert, S. J., Director of the Pon-

tifical Biblical Institute in Jerusalem) deal with the teachings of the
Catholic Church on the study of the Bible (especially the instructions flow-
ing out of the Second Vatican Council): on the relation of Scripture to
church tradition (two that are one), the tension between the word of God
and its embodiment in human words (God is true author and man is true
author); the license to critical investigation—within the limitations of
faith; the need for guidance of the Spirit for true understanding of Scrip-
ture. These matters are discussed by all three participants from slightly
different angles; the relevance of or to Judaism is referred to in passing
by Mejia, enlarged upon by Gilbert, who details the modern scholarly
Catholic interest in early Judaism and ends with an agenda of common
study. The essays are long and expert on theory and short on application
(an illustration would be helpful of what really happens when critical
scholarship results in a contradiction to Scripture or tradition). They
reflect a tradition of learned and disciplined discussion and controversy on
the effects of modernity on exegesis.

On the Jewish side there is nothing comparable. Nahum Sarna (pro-
fessor emeritus of Bible, Brandeis University) surveys and illustrates
ancient and medieval Bible exegesis with his usual grace, taking pride in
its diversity and the nonconformity with tradition (in some areas) of its
leading lights. He does not bring his survey beyond the fifteenth century,
and refers only incidentally to one or two principles of exegesis of any of
his sources. The problems raised by modernity are not discussed

David Berger (professor of history, Brooklyn College and City Univer-
sity of New York) presents an instructive lesson in the effects of polemic
on exegesis: immoralities of the Patriarchs that Christians attacked Jews
defended, misdeeds of heroes praised by Christians (Jesus' approval of
David's eating of shewbread) Jews took a dim view of. Secular, modern
challenges to biblical morality (e.g. the seamy side of Jacob's life)
stimulate a Jewish response that points to the subtle critique of its heroes
by the very narrative structure and vocabulary. Nothing is said here of
exegetical theory or the inspired status of Scripture.

Equally instructive is the survey of the place of the Bible in the medieval
Jewish curriculum and in everyday spirituality presented by Frank
Talmage (professor, Department of Near Eastern Studies, University of
Toronto). The chief lesson is the inadequacy of the conventional division
of medieval Jewry between the Talmud-centered Ashkenazim and the
Bible-centered Sephardim. Talmage documents the cross currents, the
ebbing and flowing of Bible study in both communities, making a
valuable contribution to the study of medieval Jewish culture that hardly
enters into questions of the authority of Scripture or the principles of its
interpretation.

Of a totally different nature are twin papers by Michael Wyschogrod (professor of philosophy in the City University of New York) and Edward A. Synan (professor in the Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, Toronto) examining the medieval interpretation of the Church doctrine of the annulment of the ceremonial law of the Old Testament, making its observance, after Christ, a mortal sin. Both scholars end with private proposals for a new approach to the doctrine, recognizing the validity of the ceremonial law for Jews and ''Jewish-Christians.'' This joint examination of a Christian doctrine historically, but with an ecumenical, healing purpose is the only real meeting ground of the two parties in the book.

The final essays are by Clemens Thoma (professor of Bible and Judaic Studies at the Catholic Theological Faculty of Luzern) and Simon Lauer (a research fellow at the same faculty) on an esthetic appreciation of Scripture. The former writes of the beauty of the Bible, with a variety of suggestions as to what that may mean, and a warm appreciation of rabbinic parables; the latter gives historical examples of a ''humanistic'' (in the classical sense, that of Erasmus and Moses Mendelsohn) appreciation of Scripture.

The collection shows the inexperience of the Jews in modern theological thought and their preference for historical-exegetical discourse; and the expertness of Catholic scholars in theology and their preference for scholastic discussion. It faithfully represents the disparate interest of the two scholarly communities in the issue of ''The authority and interpretation of Scripture.''

The Hebrew University,   Moshe GREENBERG
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THE DISGUISES OF THE GODS IN THE *ILIAD*

WARREN SMITH

This paper explores the passages in the *Iliad* in which the gods transform themselves into the likenesses of men and other creatures. I consider to what extent Homer distinguishes between a "likeness" which a divinity assumes, and that divinity's "true" appearance and nature.[1] In general I take issue with those scholars who lay great emphasis on the Homeric anthropomorphism of the gods. I argue rather that many passages point to the utter alienation of divine from mortal in appearance and nature; because of this alienation, the gods need to take on human form to soften the differences when they pass into the mortal realm. Though my paper makes analogies with the *Odyssey* at several points, I believe that the religious concepts of the *Iliad* vary sufficiently from the *Odyssey* (in particular, there is much less emphasis in the *Iliad* on disguises used to deceive) to merit consideration in a separate study.

It must be confessed at the outset that the distinction between simile (he was *like* night, they were *like* bees) and transformation into another shape (she *likened* herself to an old woman) is often not as clear in Homer as his translators might seem to imply.[2] The identical verb, ἔοικα, can be used by Homer with either meaning in mind; and there is a similar vagueness about related words such as ὡς, ἴκελος, οἷα. Aware of the ambiguity of his own language, the poet will sometimes (though not with any consistency) attempt to clarify his meaning by specifying the point of comparison. In one of the best-known Homeric similes, for example, the Myrmidons are like (ἐοικότες) wasps, 16.259. Since this verb can refer to physical resemblance (cf. 3.158, 11.613), for all that we can tell at first, the Myrimidons may actually in this passage resemble wasps, may have taken on their appearance. To avoid this impression, the poet enlightens us: he meant the comparison to refer to their "anger and spirit," 266-267. Consider a much shorter example where Idomeneus is likened to a boar—not in appearance but in ἀλκή, his prowess in battle (4.253, expanded at 17.281-282).

Clearly "likeness" can touch on any quality which strikes the poet's fancy, and, where the qualifier is not added, a passage which refers to likeness can be open to a wide range of possible interpretations by the reader.[3]

In the many passages where gods are said to be *like* mortals, it seems most natural to understand the reference to be to some sort of physical transformation;[4] but even here the god's behavior may be more the point at issue, as at 5.604, "and now Ares stands beside him like (ἐοικώς) a mortal man" (cf. 13.357). Does Homer merely suggest that in some general way, for a god to come down from Olympos and stands beside mortals is to behave like, "be like" a man? Or has Ares actually changed, in some undefined way, from an immortal appearance to a mortal one?

When natural phenomena are involved, the concept may be even more imprecise. In 1.47 Apollo moves "like night" (cf. Heracles in *Od.* 11.606). What, then, is the point of reference; is it the invisibility of Apollo, or the slow, steady pace at which he moves, or his hostility and threatening mood, or all of these? Then again, the gods often resemble birds. In 7.59-61 Apollo and Athene sit in a tree like (ἐοικότες) vultures. Have they really taken on vulture form, or are they merely like predators, insofar as one or the other will profit, depending on which champion falls? In another variation, a non-human creature is momentarily humanized. The river Scamander "resembles a man" (ἀνέρι εἰσάμενος) when he protests to Achilles from beneath his waves, 21.213; yet he still behaves much like a river when he subsequently wells up and floods his banks. Perhaps the resemblance is rather in the human *speech* which he needs to use if he is to register his protest, in the manner of the horse Xanthos in 19.404.

In 4.73 is a striking example of divine transformation which tugs us in several directions at once over the issue of its literalness. Athena darts from Olympos to earth "such as (οἷον) a shooting star" thrown by Zeus; and analogy, apparently, but it begins to sound more like a transformation a few lines later when Homer introduces the participle εἰκυῖα: Athena was "in the likeness" of such a star. When she lands (in the form of a star?) the Greeks and Trojans are filled with wonder. Such a scene, like Achilles' encounter with Scamander, passes back and forth between simile

and transformation: Athena picks up speed, moves as fast as a shooting star: she is viewed by the army in the form of a star; yet after she has landed, with no word of any change, she is still Athena.[5] To a reader who insists on strict logic, equally disturbing is a passage like 3.386 where Aphrodite, though supposedly resembling an old woman, yet (upon close inspection by Helen) still has her own lovely breast and neck (396-7); how, then has she "changed" from her natural self?

Yet despite many ambiguities about the literalness of transformation, or whether resemblance is really meant in a "physical" sense, clearly there are many passages in the *Iliad* where a god, on arriving on earth, does have, or takes on, a physical resemblance to a man; some sort of literal transformation has taken place, though as we can already see from the example of Aphrodite just above, the "resemblance" may be very superficial, the god is not "transformed into" the person in the complete sense, and the disguise can be very easily seen through.[6] Sometimes the disguise might be called "generic," so that the god is simply said to look like an (unspecified) mortal (Ares in 5.604, 13.357); or, though still not looking like a specific known individual, the god may resemble someone from a particular age group: Poseidon in 14.135-136 looks like "an old man;" Hermes puts on the form of a "young man," 24.347; or finally, the god may choose to look like a particular individual, known to the person whom he addresses: Apollo looks like Periphas at 17.323-325; Poseidon looks like Calchas at 13.45.

Conversely, at the very moment of departure when the god seems to start to fade back into his natural realm, the disguise is no longer operative: Ares looks like a dark cloud as he darts back to Olympos at 5.867. Or the superhuman speed of the god singles him out: this seems to be the meaning when Poseidon turns away at 13.62. When there is no reference to such change, the departure may at least follow close on a verbal admission by the god of his identity, so that he is no longer protected by the cover of anonymity (Hermes at 24.468 sq.) Clearly it is not a strictly consistent or logical theological concept at stake here; rather the poet explores a variety of ways to use the god's departure as a rite of passage to indicate the gulf between divine and mortal.

The gods come down out of a vaguely defined void into the world
in which we can see them, and when their divinity is recognised by
a mortal, it is usually a kind of spark or essence—an unearthly
beauty, a gleam in the eye, a way of moving, a divine ''glow''—
rather than a more concrete feature, peculiar to any individual god,
which is singled out. We rarely get the sense that there is a
''natural'' way for each individual god to look so that one could
distinguish, say, Hermes from Ares, in the sense that Priam calls
attention to distinguishing features among the Greek warriors in
3.162 sq., with an emphasis on the variety of their heights. Yet
there are some apparent, at least partial exceptions. In 1.528-530
Zeus has dark brows and ambrosial locks in his meeting with
Thetis. Such an allusion is unusual, but one might expect a certain
distinctiveness about descriptions of Zeus' appearance. He is more
aloof and ''Olympian'' than the other gods; there can be no
reference to his disguised appearance since he never uses a disguise,
or comes down to mingle with morals, and when we see him he is
always as he ''really is'' in his secret realm.

Another passage which might seem to imply distinctions among
the appearances of the various gods is 2.477, an overblown descrip-
tion in which the poet delights in building up analogies to Agamem-
non.[7] The Greek commander resembles Zeus in his eyes and head,
Ares in his girth, Poseidon in his breast, and is like a bull in his
prominence over all. Surely one cannot press too far the features
associated with each god here. Does the poet really envision some-
thing distinctive about Ares' girth or Poseidon's breast, to single
them out from the girths and breasts of other gods, in the specific
sense that Ajax, for example, is taller then the other Argives by a
head and shoulders (3.227)? The point is rather that Agamemnon
exudes a divinity, a majesty, which makes him larger than life; this
the poet chooses to convey by making an inventory of his features.[8]
The emphasis is on the cumulative impression made by Agamem-
non as a whole, rather than on the size and shape of the individual
parts.

While there are a number of passages in Homer in which an
individual mortal is recognized by distinctive characteristics such as
his height or his back (and in the *Odyssey*, even the hands and feet
of an individual may be singled out for recognition)[9] the gods are

all beautiful, tall, and without blemish. Consider the references to Hera's beauty as she dresses herself in 14.169; all the adjectives describing her are laudatory such as ''desirable, fair, gleaming, ambrosial;'' none of this helps us tell her apart from the other goddesses: the epithets of Aphrodite in 3.396 are very similar. When it comes to goddesses, one is as beautiful as another. In the case of mortals, however, it is their imperfections and blemishes which distinguish them. Odysseus' unimposing, stocky appearance is considered a defect at first until he begins to speak (3.220 sq.) The most striking and distinctive individual in the *Iliad* is the ugly Thersites, who is so grotesque that his appearance suggests his deformed character and contributes to the hatred others feel for him (2.220).

Reasons for Disguise

When a god in the *Iliad* addresses a mortal in the form of a man, what is his apparent purpose or intention in taking on this ''likeness''? One might suppose that, for one reason or another, the god wishes to shield his identity from the mortal whom he is addressing; in other words, that the mortal appearance is a disguise.[10] This explanation would fit many passages in the *Odyssey* very well, particularly in reference to the many ruses by which Athena, appearing in the guise of a variety of mortals, intervenes in the affairs of Telemachus and Odysseus. And indeed in the *Iliad* as well, deception is, beyond doubt, the intention behind some of these false appearances. A few examples: in 17.555 Athena appears like Phoenix, in body and weariless voice, to warn Menelaos to guard Patroclus; and Menelaos is in fact deceived by the appearance, for he addresses her as Phoenix. Likewise in the passage immediately following, Hector is tricked by Apollo in the guise of Phainops (583). In the whole *Iliad*, perhaps the most obviously intended and sustained deception by disguise is Athena's malicious impersonation of Deiphobus in 22.227 in order to ensure that Hector will trust her, relax his guard, and be killed by Achilles. Deception here is not just an incidental byproduct of the disguise, but achieves a clear result which, unfortunately for Hector, is pivotal to the plot.[11] Finally, it must be mentioned that a disguise may be assumed by a god with the intention of tricking another

god. Thus in Book 13, Poseidon takes on several shapes, first that
of Calchas (45), then Thoad (216); and we are told that it was Zeus
whom he mainly intended to fool by these disguises (355-357) for
fear of offending his elder brother by taking sides against him.
However, neither Hera (14.153) or Zeus (15.8) has any trouble
picking out Poseidon when they gaze toward the battlefield;
distance is no barrier to them, but as we will see, mortals seem to
need a hard look at close range in order to recognize a divinity.

Yet despite all this evidence, it remains important to note that
costumes and shapes may serve purposes distinct from that of
disguise and deception. Some ulterior motive is especially obvious
in the case of creatures neither human nor Olympian: when they
intend to pass into the human realm, either come to earth or com-
municate with men, they need to find a form which will enable
them either to blend into their surroundings, or speak with human
beings at their own level. In 21.213 Scamander "resembles a man"
for no other reason, it appears, than because the need arises for him
to burst into human speech to warn Achilles away. Earlier the horse
Xanthos was granted a human voice to address Achilles.[12] Boreas,
being a wind, has no natural body; he has to assume a horse-like
shape if he is to mate with a mare. Hypnos puts on a bird-like form
in order to look natural, and adds to the effect by sitting in a tree
nestled among the branches, when he wishes to sneak up unawares
on Zeus.[13]

Moreover, this same need for disguise applies to the spirits of the
dead. The psyche of Patroclus, in its visit to Achilles when it urges
him to get on with the funeral for his body, is *like* (εἰκυῖα, 23.66) the
real Patroclus in every way, including his size and features; yet
Achilles is horrified when he tries to embrace it and the psyche
dissolves into a puff of smoke.[14] The gibbering wraith behind the
false front is horrifying, like the witch Duessa in Spenser's *Fairie
Quenne*, who in her true form is so ugly that her lover, on seeing her,
laments "That ever to have toucht her, I did deadly rew."[15] The
psyche is not the "real" Patroclus, but only an *eidolon* which
resembles him. The inside which ought to have been there, the liv-
ing Patroclus, has been sucked out of the shade. Homer sometimes
introduces a dichotomy between an outer appearance and an inner
nature, as with the robots of Hephaestus who resemble maidens in

every way but have *phrenes* inside; Hesiod's Pandora is similar, with a beautiful outside and a shameless inner nature.[16] With a shade of Patroclus we get only half the dichotomy, since the only "inner nature" left to it is smoke and a squeaky voice.

The situation is similar with the Dream which appears to Agamemnon in 2.20. This Dream is "like" (ἐοικώς 20) Nestor in appearance; and yet there is no indication that the resemblance is meant to trick Agamemnon; the Dream itself drops any pretense of trickery early in his speech when he announces that he is a "messenger of Zeus" and reports the concerns of the king of the gods; it makes no attempt to speak from the viewpoint of Nestor.[17] Nor does Agamemnon give any sign that he has been so tricked. In recounting the dream to his council, he dwells only on the uncanny resemblance to Nestor which it bore, as though admiring the skill of the craftsman who could make such an accurate copy. Agamemnon's amazement has a parallel in the confrontation between Achilles and the shade of Patroclus; Achilles remarks on the surprising "likeness" of the shade to the real Patroclus. In sum: there is no indication that "deception" lies behind Agememnon's dream's choice of disguise, except in the sense that the dream wants to appear trustworthy and talk Agamemnon into believing a rather incredible message. But being a dream it evidently has no natural form of its own, and thus is *forced* to make a choice of some form to assume before it can appear to a mortal.

If such creatures as Dreams, Winds, Rivers, and Souls have an apparent need to put on "mortal" garb, or assume mortal shape, or speak in mortal voices, the same kind of need seems to extend to the gods as well in certain instances; at least the assumption that they use disguises to deceive does not explain every such passage.[18] There is often a kind of holiday atmosphere to a god's earthly visit. Their attempts to look human have a sportive quality which does not always seem consistent with deliberate deception. Aphrodite's flimsy getup as an "old woman" fails to cover up adequately her divine neck, breast, and eyes (396-7), and Helen knows quickly that she is addressing her old confidante and adversary (In the *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite*, 81 sq., the goddess is likewise completely unconvincing when she tries to disguise herself as a "virgin.") Poseidon when appearing as an "old man" in 14.136 hints at his

divinity by informing Agamemnon about the will of the gods (143) and departs with a terrible shout like 10,000 men, inspiring the Achaeans with courage; the appearance as an "old man" seem whimsical, serves no obvious purpose; the gigantic shout precludes the idea that the divine visit is meant to be known by Agamemnon alone. Even more striking is 21.284-298 where Poseidon and Athene descend to the battlefield. Here the poet uses the full form of the expression, δέμας δ'ἄνδρεσσιν ἐίκτην they were like men in body, apparently leaving no doubt that some sort of physical resemblance is meant. Yet Poseidon announces at once that they are gods, introducing Athene by name but referring to himself only as ἐγώ (190), implying that a close look will make his identity obvious.

Divine Epiphany and Divine Nature

An attractive alternative to the idea that disguises are invariably intended to deceive, is the possibility that the human garb and appearance are meant to soothe the mortal's fright, somehow make the visit more bearable. Helen fears Aphrodite after she has seen through her disguise and the goddess speaks in her own person. The sudden arrival of Iris in 24.170 causes Priam's knees to tremble. Fear can be generated in these private visits; perhaps an epiphany to a larger group would create too great a panic, as suggested by the commotion resulting from Athene's "crash landing" in 4.80. In the famous scene (1.194 sq.) where Athene intervenes in the crisis between Agamemnon and Achilles, she appears to Achilles alone; none of the others sees her. It is a commonplace, among those who discuss this scene, to conclude that Athena's intervention at this point symbolizes the "victory of reason" triumphing over anger in Achilles' heart.[19] To read Homer this way, it seems to me, fails to give full credit to the richness of his religious concept. We need to consider the scene as though from the goddess' point of view. Though it is unusual for a goddess to be visible only to one person in a group, the scene is actually only a variation on the more common motif that only those standing closest to the gods are aware of their identity. Since Athene must intervene in the midst of a heated argument, and Achilles is about to draw his

sword, she has no time to prepare herself properly for the visit, and has to resort to the drastic expedient of distracting the attention of everyone else (compare Athene's trick of distracting Penelope in *Odyssey* 19.478-479) so as to be visible to Achilles in her undisguised, "real" self. Still another variation on this idea, that a god may be recognized by individuals but cannot appear before a group except in a momentary flash of departure, is the privilege accorded Diomedes in Book 5. He has the "mist" taken from his eyes so that he will be able to distinguish gods from mortals when he encounters them on the battlefield. It must be noted that gods in the *Iliad* never stand and make speeches to the enture army under their own *personae*; a scene like Aeschylus' *Eumenides* 397 sq., where Athene enters and addresses the company at large, would not be so handeled by Homer: he would have her appear in disguise, or else speak only to one or two individuals.[20]

It is also significant that when Achilles recognises the (undisguished) Athene it is not her dress, not her aegis, or yet any strictly "physical" feature of the goddess which triggers the recognition (ἔγνω 1.199): it is the terrible gleam in her eye, like that of Thor in Norse mythology, so bright as to give him away even when he is in disguise.[21] A shrewd observor, or one as close to the gods as Achilles is, can see through what is external. Here, though, is no false front: he confronts the undisguished Athena. To see a god up close is to confront strength, beauty, and power on a scale larger than life. Exactly what the divine quality is, what one sees that is different in a god, may be only vaguely defined, but regardless of their general apparent lack of distinguishing individual features, they all share a common essence. Hector in 15.247 is well aware that it is a god who is addressing him "face to face" (ἄντην) i.e. apparently without disguise, but he evidently does not know Apollo by sight despite Apollo's repeated presence and efforts on the Trojans' behalf. It is the divine essence, a look, a way of moving, which is emphasized. When Oelian Ajax witnesses the departure of "Calchas" in 13.455, Poseidon's (gigantic) footsteps as he departs give him away; understandably, considering how fast Poseidon walks in 13.20.[22] In a comical variation on this, Hera and Athene, anxious to lower themselves to human scale, overcompensate by taking jerky little steps like shivering

doves when they walk on the battlefield, not that this makes their
disguise any more effective than usual. As often, the god only goes
through the motions of a disguise, and recognition seems to follow
almost inevitably, the recognition seeming to reflect a kind of tacit
understanding between gods and men; by it the poet lets the reader
know that the divine message has been fully received, has had its
desired effect. Thus in 2.791 Iris liken herself to Polites but Hector
"does not fail to know" the word of the goddess (807), i.e. it
registers on him that he must do as she orders, and make sure that
proper battle stations are assigned to each of the allies. Moreover
the effect of a god's words can be a feeling rather than obedience
to a specific message: in 3.139-140 Iris, in disguise again, "leaves
sweet longing" in Helen's heart for her husband.

We rarely encounter a distinction in the *Iliad* between the way a
god "really" looks when not intending to be viewed by a mortal,
and the supposed "false appearance" which they assume on earth.
Homer refuses to accomodate our demand for strict logic. When
describing the visit of a god, he fails time and again to make the
distinction we are looking for: he changed *from* A into B. Instead
Homer gives us only the second half: he put on the form of B. But
even in instances where no disguise is mentioned, and a direct
epiphany seems to be described, we are disappointed when we seek
details about how an "undisguised" god would look to a human
being. Evidently Homer holds back in such instances because he
does not conceive that the true essence of a god is summed up by
a set of physical features; something more profound is at stake. One
acknowledges the presence of a god by sensing it, "knowing" it.
This is a different kind of recognition from one in which the
features of a portrait trigger our recognition of an old acquaintance.
Even in the case of mortals, *how* one looks is often regarded as a
kind of accretion on the body, not part of one's essence. Thus old
Phoenix can desire to "scrape off" old age from his face. Similarly
in the epiphany of Demeter in the Homeric *Hymn to Demeter*, the
goddess "thrusts away old age, and beauty flows all about her."
But also "grace" is an actual substance which can be poured on the
head of Pandora, the artifact shaped by the gods in Hesiod.[23] Old
age and beauty are "layers" which can be scraped off, revealing,
not a "secondary layer" of appearance, but rather a "true nature"

underneath. Similarly in the case of the gods, a disguise is put on, not to hide a set of features or a stature which lies lurking beneath; rather it is the divine "nature" which lies underneath. Conceptually, if not logical, the scheme is at least extremely simple. We see it in the robots of Hephaestus (mentioned above, p. 166) who are so cleverly constructed as not only to have the "appearance" of young women on the outside, but the qualities of human beings on the inside. Likewise on the *Odyssey* Homer is careful to point out that Circe's pigs are not pork through and through; they merely have shaggy bristles on the outside and the "minds" of men inside.[24] Much more in the case of the gods, then, can we see the principle operative: they have a kind of inner essence which transcends, shines through, whatever layer they choose to drape over themselves.

Hermes in the last book of the *Iliad*, when travelling down to escort Priam, puts on the likeness of a young man who is beginning to grow a beard. This seems inconsistent with representations of Hermes in archaic art, as he is consistently depicted as bearded down to the mid-fifth century when, presumably, the more youthful literary god of Homer and the *Hymn to Hermes* begins to influence the artists' conceptions.[25] Not surprisingly however, Homer fails to say anything like "he took off his beard and put on a more youthful appearance;" that is not his way. The resulting discrepancy between Homer's description of Hermes, and the older Hermes of archaic art, arouses the puzzlement of Leaf and Bayfield in the commentary *ad loc.*, whereas Prof. Macleod in his edition of *Iliad* 24 rejects the idea that a beardless Hermes could be intended as a true portrait of the god: "Hermes' youthfulness is a disguise, not a manifestation of his nature."[26] Yet what is that "nature," and how might it be manifested? There are no other data in Homer about Hermes' "natural" appearance; in the god's other principal appearance to a mortal in Homer (*Od.* 10.272 sq) he puts on the same form again, as though it were the only one in his repertoire. Why does Homer leave us with such a gap in our information? It is surely implausible that Homer might conceive of Hermes, or any god, as either "invisible" or bodiless until he appears to a human; such concepts, as has been amply demonstrated by Prof. Renehan, are in any case foreign to archaic thought.[27] Rather, the poet finds

it either impossible or profitless to speculate on a god's appearance
in detail when he is not visible to the human eye. There are cer-
tainly minor exceptions to this ban, as when we hear about Zeus'
ambrosial locks or Hera's lovely hair. But the essential point is, that
Homer wants to imply the separation of human and divine by a
gulf—one which the god needs to bridge before communicating
with mortals. The poet makes this implication by causing the god
to put on a mortal appearance before fighting alongside, or speak-
ing with, human beings. By the assumption of mortal features the
god puts a curb on himself: he subjects himself temporarily to the
limitations of mortality which include youth, old age, identifiable
facial features, and the ability to be wounded in battle.

Thus up to the time when Hermes appears to a mortal, in a sense
he has no "normal" way to look, but has to pull some sort of
appearance, bearded or unbearded, out of his wardrobe for his trip
to earth. The real essence of Hermes is his divine nature—not that
part of him conveyed by ἐοικώς "in the likeness of," but that part
of him which one "knows." Homer often uses the verbs γιγνώσκω
or νοέω to indicate the moment when the penetrating gaze of a
shrewd mortal senses the divine nature: Achilles knows Athene;
Helen "recognizes" the neck of Aphrodite; Hector "knows" the
voice of Iris; the mist is removed from Diomedes' eyes so that he
may "know" the gods.[28]

Homer, acutely self-conscious about the distinction between
outer semblance and inner reality, gropes at the concept of the
gods' "otherness" from mortals by artificially creating a false front
which the mortal must penetrate to know who the god really is. The
concept can be vividly illustrated by a contrast with Vergil's
method in two passages of divine visitation in the *Aeneid*. When
Allecto goes to visit Turnus she "becomes" (*fit*) the old priestess
Calybe; this would go too far for Homer who sees a disguise as
relating only to appearance. Again, when Aeneas is preparing to
depart from Dido, there is a rather bizarre variation on Homer: the
image which appears to the hero on shipboard "looks like" the god
Mercury "in every way," though whether that is its real identity
is left in doubt.[79] Whatever Vergil may have in mind here, Homer
would not speak of the appearance of a god in such a way, leaving
open the possibility that it might be only an image which would be

found false when probed, in the manner of Patroclus' psyche. Homer's categories are more fixed. He can speak of a mortal, such as Achilles or Helen, looking or acting like a god, or Patroclus coming on "like something more than a man," indicating that either their beauty or military prowess goes beyond normal human powers. But an inhuman creature, whether it be god, dream, wind, or river, does not select a "divine" disguise for an earthly visitation; in such cases the change is rather in the direction away from the divine, toward the mundane, whether the new shape be human, birdlike, or equine.

The gods, then, often need to select an "outer semblance" for their visits, and for this purpose one semblance might seem as functional as any other. Yet the poet is after all an artist, not a theologian; his understanding of the gods need not reflect perfect consistency, and divine transformation is a motif which may serve more than one purpose. The "likeness" of a god to one person or another may have as many points of reference as a developed simile. An analogy from the medieval period will be helpful. C.S. Lewis discusses the incredible license in which the medieval Hereford mapmaker indulges:[30] he shows Scotland as an island distinct from England, in almost certain disregard of his own knowledge of geography. Apparently the mapmaker creates a geographical schism between the two countries in order to demonstrate their political separation. Homer's purposes, too, are far-ranging. The dream in Book 2 looks like Nestor probably because a Nestor-like appearance is a proclamation of his function, to propose strategy to the commander-in-chief. Again, it is cunning of Athene to disguise herself as Deiphobus, dearest to Hector of all his brothers, when she wants to persuade him to stand and fight Achilles; and the poet calls attention to his special trust for this brother. Still a different function is served by the decision to show Hermes as "beardless" in Book 24. Homer contrasts his youth and vigor with the decrepit and wearied Priam, and even introduces a kind of father-son familiarity between the two; the dramatic irony thus created looks ahead to the naivetee of the infant Hermes of the *Homeric Hymn*. Homer's young Hermes turns out to know all about Priam, Achilles, and Hector; yet he speaks as though flustered at Priam's questioning.[31]

The Monstrousness of the Gods

The *Odyssey* gives us many glimpses of the gods, particularly Athene, conducting themselves among men on a basis more familiar than that in the *Iliad*. Hermes' claim in *Il*. 24, that it is shameful for a god to be entertained by men, would seem rather out of place in the *Odyssey* where Athene often sits down, albeit in disguise, at table with Telemachus and his associates. Athene's leisurely conversations with Odysseus do not have any real parallel in the *Iliad*, where the gods scamper out of the way after delivering their messages.[32] In general, the gods of the *Iliad* are at great pains to disassociate themselves from mortal problem; their *otherness* from men is a major issue. In recognition of this, we will conclude by acknowledging those passages in the *Iliad* where the gods appear least anthropomorphic.

Homer occasionally reminds us that the gods need to make some changes to fit into the mortal world, due to their greatness in size. The size of the gods is rarely at issue in the *Odyssey*, though a passage like *Od*. 6.107, about the conspicuousness of Artemis among her followers, seems to imply that Artemis is unusually tall. But in the *Iliad*, there are suggestions that the gods are not only tall, but freakishly gigantic, monstrous: Ares' body covers seven acres when he falls; Hera taking an oath lays her hand on land and sea; Poseidon covers ground in gigantic strides; Hera and Hypnos cause the tops of the trees to shake when they walk; the personified Eris is a grotesque giant who strides between the lines of men; the giant hand of Zeus pushes Hector into battle.[33] Everything they do is bigger. When Ares shouts as loud as 10,000 men, Fraenkel takes this as a movement away from personification, "a transition from the person Ares to the thing war;" but this conclusion is unconvincing: Ares as the god of war is not the only deity with a high decibel count. Hera can also shout very loud (50 men), and stirs up the spirits of men; also the army is frightened by the combined lung-power of Achilles joined by Athene when he stands at the ditch and yells; Poseidon at one point is also as loud as 10,000 men.[34] Ares, it seem, has a huge cry but not distinctively loud in comparison with other gods, and once again, Homer contents himself with qualities which the gods share in common, as opposed to singling

out distinctive features of a particular god. If we may assume, then, that the gods in general have an enormously loud tone of voice, we may better understand their motive for confiscating the voices of mortals; when not intended as a trick, the assumption of a mortal voice may have the main purpose of lowering a gigantic roar to a level which others may understand. At the end of the *Oedipus at Colonus* (1623) the mysterious voice of the anonymous god summoning Oedipus is enough to cause everyone's hair to stand on end. In Homer, at 24.170 Iris appears to Priam, apparently without any disguise, and though she tries to compensate for her loudness by speaking in low tones (τυτθόν), even this is enough to strike terror into Priam's heart. This compensation by Iris is comparable to the scene where Athene and Apollo reduce their stride to the steps of shivering doves.

Though W. F. Otto speaks for many scholars in his insistence that such instances of divine monstrosity are "rare and never consistently maintained,"[35] the almost whimsical way in which they are scattered through the *Iliad* is a reminder that there is an air of mystery about the gods' true size, appearance, and voice; they can never be neatly categorized as looking and sounding just like ordinary people. Due to these aberrations, I believe it is misleading to say that the gods are fully "anthropomorphic," in the usual sense that word is intended; their mysterious otherness lies behind their need to adjust to human scale, and limit appearances to one or two individuals.

One important passage remains to be considered. When Ares and Athene appear together in the shield of Achilles 18.516 sq.,[36] we have a unique opportunity to see the gods as "fixed" in Homer's mind by their representation in art, with no tricks or inappropriate costume. They are "huge" (μεγάλω) and "conspicuous" (ἀριζήλω); but the people next to them are smaller (ὑπολίζονες ἦσαν). Not surprisingly, no distinction is made here between Ares and Athene; their common divinity is paramount. The emphasis is rather on the distinction between gods and men. The images of the gods have been worked in gold, and they are conspicuous in size, towering over humans. The two deities in the picture have not made the requisite adjustment to human scale, as though posing for the artist with their masks off and their radiance turned up at nor-

mal level. The term translated "conspicuous" can also mean gleaming, bright; it is used of the thunderbolt, a σῆμα of Zeus, in 13.244 and 22.27. The poet has given us almost none of the information we might have wanted about personal appearance of the gods in detail: he merely impresses on us the efforts of the artist to show them as different, brighter, bigger, more conspicuous than men. The "undefinable" difference between gods and men, enigmatic but ubiquitous in the Iliad, is the impression with which we shall close.

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¹ Unspecified citations of book and number (e.g. 22.13) will refer to the *Iliad*. Important studies relevant to the topic of this paper include J. Clay, "*Demas* and *Aude*: the Nature of Divine Transformation in Homer," *Hermes* 102, 1974, 129-136; B.C. Dietrich, "Divine Epiphanies in Homer," *Numen* 30 (1983) 52-79; J. Griffin, *Homer on Life and Death*, Oxford 1980, 144-204; M. Willock, "Some Aspects of the Gods in the *Iliad*," *Essays on the Iliad* ed. J. Wright, Indiana 1978, 58-69.

² See H. Bannert, "Zur Vogelgestalt der Götter bei Homer," *Wiener Studien* 12, 1978, 34: "Zwar findet sich ἐοικώς sowohl bei Vergleichen als auch zur Bezeichnung von Identität..."

³ As noted by W. C. Scott, *The Oral Nature of the Homeric Simile*, Leiden 1974, p. 7.

⁴ Dietrich (above, note 1) 56: "It follows that the various verbal forms and expressions for 'like' in Homer could signify either true identification or be intended as comparison only. In many cases the distinction between fact and simile is quite clear." I take issue with Dietrich's terms "true identification" and "fact" (Bannert, above n. 2, is similarly misleading); the gods, at least, never actually *become* mortals but only resemble them.

⁵ On the forms the gods assume when they travel, see esp. T. Krischer, *Formale Konvention der Homerischen Epik*, Munich 1971, esp. 20-23. Passages of divine "travel from place to place" in apparently altered from are all typed as similes by Scott (above, n, 3) 12; though he considers the possibility that bird-similes are a "remembrance of the bird as an epiphany of the god" (77). So. F. Dirlmeier in his helpful study, *Die Vogelgestalt homerischer Götter*, Heildelberg 1967. Typical of many studies is the caution of M. Coffey's "The Function of the Homeric Simile", *AJP* 78 (1957) 120: "It is perhaps unwise to press either interpretation too hard."

⁶ Clay (above n.l) 130: "Possibly... Homer does not used *eidos* (of divine disguise) because it might suggest that divine transformations are mere illusions." But *eidos* is in fact used of the appearance of Hermes as young man in 24.376. Moreover many passages do suggest that divine transformation are mere illusions, i.e. disguises,; e.g. 13.357, 21.600, 22.10.

⁷ On this passage see H. Fraenkel, *Die Homerischen Gleichnisse* Göttingen 1977 96-97.

⁸ Cf. *Hamlet* 3.4.55-59:

See what a grace was seated on this brow,
Hyperion's curls, the front of Jove himself,
An eye like Mars to threaten and command;
A station like the herald Mercury
New lighted on a heaven-kissing hill.

⁹ *Od.* 4.148-150: Menelous "knows" Telemachos by his "likeness" to Odysseus (cf. 141). In the case of Hera, even βοῶπις, ox-eyed, is not an epithet peculiar to her but rather is shared by Clymene (3.144), Philomedousa (7.10), and Halia (18.40).

¹⁰ Dietrich (above, n. 1) 62, fails to distinguish clearly between *Iliad* and *Odyssey* on this point.

¹¹ On this scene see Willcock (above. n. l) 68, who sees Athena's intervention as confirming what would have happened in any case.

¹² 19.407; Compare Clay (above, n. l) 132.

¹³ Boreas: 20.224. Hypnos: 14.290 (discussion by Bannert, above, n. 2, 38-39).

¹⁴ E. Rohde, *Psyche*⁸ trans. Hillis, NY 1972 [1920], 7: "...it survives death though, indeed, only as a breath-like image much as we have seen reflections of our own faces mirrored in water." Cf. E. Vermeule, *Aspects of Death in Early Greek Art and Poetry*, Cal. 1977, 7-11, 30.

¹⁵ Spenser, *Fairie Queene* 1.2.40: Duessa's beautiful beautiful appearance hides her ugly reality as a foul old woman. Similarly, Alcina in *Orlando Furioso* 8.72.

¹⁶ Robots: 18.418 sq. Pandora: *Works and Days* 73 sq.

¹⁷ That the dream should look like Nestor, but call itself a divine messenger, puzzles G.S. Kirk in *The Iliad: A Commentary*, Vol. 1, Cambridge 1985, 116; but his conjectural solution seems to me implausible, that the poet is "abbreviating" a longer scene like *Od.* 4.795-841. The *Odyssey* scene presents the same difficulty as the scene in *Il.* 2, namely that the dream, despite its appearance as a mortal, drops broad hints about its divinity (*Od.* 4.805-807, 825-829) though Penelope is not as quick as Agamemnon to catch on to its true identity.

¹⁸ The gods have qualities in common with other extra-terrestrial beings; see Griffin, above n.l, p. 62 on the gods and spirits of the dead as opposite poles, with humans balanced in the middle.

¹⁹ W. F. Otto, *The Homeric Gods*, London 1979 [1954] 48; Willcock (above, n. l) 60; E. R. Dodds, *The Greeks and the Irrational*, Boston 1957 [1951] 14; Dietrich (above, n. l) 73 n. 46 and further in *Numen* 26 (1979) 143-146.

²⁰ In the *Odyssey*, however (not including scenes of divine departure like 3.371 sq., which seem to be in a special category) Athene has two epiphanies before groups: from the rafters in O.'s hall, 22.298-291 and at the end of the poem when she breaks up the fighting Ithakans, 24.529-533.

²¹ On the gleam in Athena's eye adding a note of the supernatural, see Griffin (above, n. l) 158-160. Compare the bright light which shines fom the flesh of Demeter in *Hom. Hymn* 278-9; Athena's gleaming visage in Eur. *Ion* 1548-1551; and in Scandinavian legend, the piercing glances of Thor like fire, e.g. P. Munch, *Norse Mythology* Detroit 1968 [1926] 78.

²² Bannert (above, n. 2) 41: "Gemeint sind wohl nicht die Fußabdrücke, sondern die Spuren der Bewegungen..."

²³ Phoenix: 9.445-6. Demeter: *Hymn* 275-6. Pandora: Hesiod, *W&D* 65. J.S. Clay, *The Wrath of Athena*, Princeton 1983, 161 n.54, well remarks on the "purely visual character of the changes" when the gods pour "grace" on a mortal.

[24] *Odyssey* 10.240. In later myth, the presence of a human mind inside the beastly body becomes a commonplace of metamorphosis, cf. Ovid *Met.* 1.646-650 (Io); Apueius, *Golden Ass* 3.26a.

[25] 24.374; cf. *Od.* 10.277 sq. See, e.g. *Enciclopedia dell' Arte Antica Classica e Orientale* IV, Rome 1961, p. 4.

[26] Leaf and Bayfield, *The Iliad of Homer*[2] Amsterdam 1971 [1902]; C. Macleod, *Homer: Iliad Book XXIV*, Cambridge 1982, 116.

[27] R. Renehan, "The Greek Origins of the Concepts 'Incorporeality' and 'Immateriality,'" *GRBS* 21 (1980), 105-138 esp. 108.

[28] Achilles knows Athena: 1.199; Helen and Aprhodite: 3.396; Hector and Iris: 2.807; Diomedes and mist: 5.128.

[29] Vergil *Aen.* 4.558 (Mercury), 7.419 (Allecto). Vergil (if he really wishes to convey the same impression made by the Homeric formula he copies) seems to imply that the dream's appearance as "Mercury" is false, and covers up its true identity.

[30] C. S. Lewis, *The Discarded Image*, Cambridge 1964, 143-4.

[31] Deiphobus: 22.232-235; Hermes and Priam: 24.358-362, 433; Compare *Hymn to Hermes* 266 sq.

[32] In contrast with the Iliadic gods' aloofness and skitishness, compare e.g. *Odyssey* 13.287 sq. where Athena strokes Odysseus with her hand (288), puts herself on a level with him by comparing their trickiness (296-7), plots with him (365), sits down beside him (372).

[33] Ares: 21.407; Hera: 14.272; Poseidon: 13.17; Hera and Hypnos: 14.285; Eris: 4.443; hand of Zeus: 15.695.

[34] H. Fraenkel, *Early Greek Poetry and Philosophy* (English ed., Oxford 1975) 60; Ares' shout: 5.895-63; Hera: 5.786; Achilles and Athena: 18.218; Poseidon: 14.148-149. Compare the other-wordly shout of Dionysus in Eur. *Bacchae* 1078-85.

[35] Otto (above, n. 18) 165; S. Schein, *The Mortal Hero*, Berkeley 1984, 53 ("the gods are essentially anthropomorphic"); M. Mueller, *The Iliad* London 1984, 127 ("supernatural is foreign to the *Iliad*"); even Griffin (above, n.l.) insists on the normalcy of the Greek gods in comparison with those of other cultures ("...not monstrous or bestial, avoiding the bizarre or irrational," 172).

[36] On gods dining with men: W. Thalmann, *Conventions of Form and Thought in Early Greek Poetry* Baltimore 1984 99-102, who collects passages indicating such converse was once easy and natural. J. Redfield, *Approaches to Homer* ed. Rubino and Slemerdine Austin 1983, 220-221, finds that the disguises of the gods in the *Odyssey* cause them to be "still farther away" from men than in the *Iliad*.

IMPERIAL CHINA'S REACTIONS TO THE CATHOLIC MISSIONS*

MICHAEL LOEWE

I. The Christian presence in China

Four principal stages may be discerned in the introduction of different forms of Christianity to China. The Nestorians of the early centuries were followed by a few friars and other travellers of the Middle Ages; the sixteenth century saw determined efforts of the Roman Catholic Orders, and it is with that stage that this paper is principally concerned. Finally the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were marked by the major impact of the protestant missionaries. These stages or series of incidents should be regarded as independent.

Nestorians monks who were in flight from the west had found their way to Ch'ang-an, capital of the T'ang dynasty, from the seventh century. Material testimony of their presence may be seen even now in the 'Nestorian Monument', engraved with inscriptions in Chinese and Syriac in 781;[1] but it can hardly be claimed that these few travellers exerted much influence on Chinese culture or society, where they were but one of several groups who were propagating foreign faiths in China at the time. Buddhism had already experienced several centuries of integration in Chinese culture, alternately enjoying imperial patronage or suffering official proscription.[2] But at the time when the Nestorians arrived, the Buddhist faith and its institutions were in a comparatively flourishing state, and a project was being undertaken to translate lengthy newly received Sanskrit scriptures into Chinese. Simultaneously Muslim Arabs had been penetrating into China, and although as yet we hear little of their religious activities, by the second half of the ninth century they had given rise to considerable commercial

activity and settlements in the south.[3] In addition the imperial court and capital city countenanced the presence of Manichee and Zoroastrian teachers; there are some hints that imperial China saw no reason to reject any support for the material betterment of the population that might arise from their prayers and services.[4]

The emissaries from Roman Catholic Europe of the thirteenth century included well known figures such as Giovanni dal Piano dei Carpini (?1182-1252), William of Rubruck (in Karakorum 1245-47) and, as is more generally known, Marco Polo of Venice, who was in China between 1271 and 1295.[5] By contrast with the days of the strong native empire of T'ang, this was a period when Chinese weakness and instability had given way in face of alien conquerors, in this case the Mongols. There is little to show that attempts to propagate Christian doctrine at the courts of Khubilai Khan (reigned in China 1260-1294) and his successors were particularly effective or of sufficient strength to stimulate a significant intellectual reaction. Possibly this picture might be changed or clarified, if more direct evidence were to be forthcoming.[6]

The third principal advance took place as a result of the Counter Reformation, in the form of an active, militant missionary policy, which led to the arrival of Jesuits, Dominicans and others in India, Japan and China. When Matteo Ricci reached China in 1583 he brought with him some new, forceful ideas for the accomplishment of his task, and he laid the foundations for a long-term strategy and the work of his successors. Particular interest attaches to this stage of Christian activity in China for a number of reasons. Ricci and his colleagues were able to penetrate to well-known men of letters of the day and high-ranking officials, and even proceed to personal discussion with some of the emperors; in this way they managed to exert a far stronger influence in China than their predecessors. Secondly, the work and attitudes of Jesuits, Dominicans and Franciscans raised intellectual controversies that affected not only the work of missionaries in China, but also aspects of the Church's efforts elsewhere. In addition, the methods that Ricci adopted led to some long-lasting results, albeit not necessarily those that he would have wished or predicted. Finally there is a wealth of documentary records for this stage both in Chinese writings and in the reports submitted by the missionaries to their superiors.[7] In this

respect it may be noted that at the time in question, printing was being practised more extensively and effectively in China than in Europe.

In intellectual, political and dynastic terms the period from the late sixteenth to the end of the eighteenth century is of particular interest in Chinese history. It saw the final decades of a weakened native dynasty (Ming), which was eventually brought to an end by internal dissension, loss of confidence and foreign pressure; and it saw the establishment of one of the strongest imperical houses ever to arise (Ch'ing), whose administrative grasp was starting to falter at the time when the main activity of the Jesuits was drawing towards its close. As a result Ricci and his successors were faced with completely different political situations. Sometimes they might be able to exploit a contemporary loss of confidence by the Chinese in favour of their own mission; sometimes they encountered a strong and ruthless government, intent of preserving its own integrity and taking steps to control and contain the missionary effort. It was in such differing circumstances that Chinese and western intellects first confronted one another in depth.

The fourth stage in which Christian missionaries were active in China followed in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries as a result of Protestant and Non-conformist initiative. Owing to historical developments, it is possible that this stage brought an even more forceful impact to bear on the majority of the Chinese population than had been felt in the earlier stages, the attention now being placed on the charitable work of hospitals and schools. These achievements, however, are not our concern here.

II. The religious and intellectual background of sixteenth century China

Early in his memoirs, Ricci wrote:

> Of all the pagan nations that are known to our Europe, I know of none which has made fewer errors contrary to the things of Religion than the nation of China in its early Antiquity![8]

On inspection, however, it would seem that Ricci was perhaps being over-optimistic, and that the characteristics of China's traditional beliefs that survived in an active way in the sixteenth century

were not necessarily as favourably inclined towards Christianity as was being hoped. Had Ricci and his colleagues been able to appreciate some of these features more precisely, it is possible that some misunderstandings and controversies could have been avoided.

Primaeval Chinese religious belief and practice had included service to a multiplicity of minor deities, often each with his or her prescribed sphere of influence. There were spirits with jurisdiction over specified sites of hill or river; there were others who supervised the growth of the grain or the fertility of the soil; and there were the gods who presided over the skills and equipment, such as the oven, with which daily life was sustained. Early Chinese religion also comprised a belief in the powers of shamans who acted as intermediaries between this world and other realms, and who could effect cures, interpret dreams or exorcise evil. Similarly there was a pervasive trust in oracles and divination as a means of ascertaining the will of superior beings and determining the appropriate time and place for the principal actions of a lifetime, such as the time of marriage, choice of residence, and site of burial. In this last respect geomancy, or *feng-shui*, should perhaps be mentioned as an activity upon which Father Verbiest (1623-88) was to comment, and which was to arouse the scorn of some of the Protestant missionaries of the nineteenth century.[9]

Other religious observances which can be traced back to the earliest days of Chinese civilisation and which certainly influenced Chinese practice in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries included a variety of means of seeking deathlessness or attaining a place in the life of the world to come alongside the immortals (*hsien*). Similarly, offerings and prayers had been maintained for centuries to ensure the continuity and identity of clan and family in the somewhat volatile form of existence that was China's lot.

Along with these general beliefs and acts of worship, the imperial family of the Ming dynasty practised cults of state whose origins reached back for well over 3000 years. The kings of Shang (*c.* 2000-1100 BCE) had worshipped *ti*, or *Shang-ti*, a supreme deity, and the use of this term will feature below in connection with highly critical controversies of the 17th and 18th centuries.[10] In the imperial age (i.e. from 221 BCE onwards) the cults of state had at first been

addressed to this godhead or his derivatives; later they were transferred to the service of Heaven (*T'ien*) in the hope of acquiring cosmic blessing on the dispensation over which the emperor presided. In Ricci's time this rite was carried out regularly at one of the most numinous sites that still survive in China, whose qualities and virtues still contrive to reduce recent innovations of concrete and laicisation to their true size.[11] This cult features as an essential element of imperial structure, both justifying the emperor's authority to rule and obliging him to do so according to certain ideals. Part of the significance of the cult lay in its link between spiritual and temporal authority.

The officials and men of learning with whom Ricci made most of his contacts had all been trained in the Confucian tradition. Since about 500 BCE Confucius and his followers had propounded the view of a universe that was man-centered, each individual being obliged to serve his fellow men and to educate himself to the best of his capacity. Confucian thought saw an inescapable difference in the values and qualities of individual men and women, depending on the type of service that they could render. A community of men and women is governed, ideally, in hierarchies, in such a way that relationships with and duties towards a kinsman or a neighbour are regulated to the greatest advantage of family, clan or state, rather than that of the individual; such relationships are shaped by a common recognition of ethical ideals. Confucian thought looked back to a golden age of the past in which these ideals had been achieved by blessed monarchs and their wise advisers; supreme happiness had been brought about then, and could be brought about again, by adherence to those ideals under the beneficent rule of such supermen.[12]

In the society that he saw around him and with whose members he was hoping to come to terms, Ricci would have witnessed a variety of beliefs and concepts that are sometimes included, rather loosely, under the general term of 'Taoism'. The term embraces several types of mystical, intellectual and religious activities. There is the search for the eternal mysteries of the universe, which is usually associated with the names of Lao Tzu (4th century BCE) and Chuang Chou (*c.* 370-300 BCE) and involves a rejection of man-made, subjective values, such as those that are included in the

Confucian ethic.[13] While this approach to life was not marked by specifically religious rituals, its teachers and aphorisms were later hailed as the forerunners and the authority for certain religious practices to be mentioned immediately.

Taoism is a term which also includes a nature-centred philosophy, as described in a work known as the *Huai-nan-tzu*, and completed in 139 BCE. This mode of thought saw the universe as operating spontaneously according to its appropriate rhythms; within this universe man constitutes no more than one of a myriad creatures, being intrinsically of no greater value, better or worse, than other creatures such as rocks and stones and trees.[14] Belief in the underlying, or inbuilt, intelligence (*tao*) of this universe which assures the retention of a balance and harmony in nature, and which regulates creation, could stand in contrast with the view of nature and creation that Roman Catholic doctrine would soon be preaching.

In addition 'Taoism', or more properly 'Taoist religion' which had grown up since the second century of the present era included a variety of disciplines and exercises, spiritual and physical, which were designed to sublimate human desires, ameliorate human suffering and eliminate human fears. Such rituals, over which a clergy would preside, called on primaeval myth and the intermediacy of a number of practictioners. They were maintained in temple and monastery with their own sacred scriptures; and they gave rise to a number of practices which may have had a superficial resemblance to some Christian activities and which were due to be dismissed as superstition.[15]

When Matteo Ricci first set about his task in China he dressed himself as a Buddhist priest, in the belief that he would thereby gain recognition for his vocation and respect for his mission. In time he was to find that such a garb brought with it scorn rather than the veneration that he sought from the leaders of Chinese thought whom he wished to impress, and he abandoned that guise in favour of the dress of a Chinese man of letters. However, his initial choice revealed that he had immediately observed that it was Buddhism that exerted the most conspicuous influence in China as an organised religion, with its priests, monks, scriptures and temples, and attention will be given below to the relations and attitudes that

arose between Buddhist priest and Catholic missionary. Mahāyāna
Buddhism had in fact been established in China for some 1500
years before Ricci's arrival, bringing with it a sophisticated
metaphysic and ideas that were alien to existing Christian tradition.
It seems that the Jesuits of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries
may not have had full opportunity to appreciate the subtlety and
value of some of these concepts, such as the abnegation of self, the
path to individual enlightenment, the search for union with the
absolute or the attainment of happiness through the renunciation of
desire. In viewing this world as a mere transitory stage of existence,
and in according higher priority to the achievement of merit than
to service to family or state, Buddhism had long since come into
sharp conflict with orthodox Confucian thought; and its relation-
ship with the secular authority of Chinese government had varied
considerably over the centuries.

The Jesuits brought European ideas of science to a civilisation
which had long been engaged in seeking an explanation of the
universe that would be intellectually satisfying. The philosophers of
the late Ming court thought and wrote with a heritage of ideas that
could be traced to the fifth and fourth centuries BCE, and which
had led to the intense metaphysical speculation of the Neo-
Confucianists from the eleventh century onwards.[16] In intellectual
terms the missionaries would be exchanging views with men whose
thinking had been largely coloured by this development in one of
two ways. One school concentrated on the observation of external
phenomena as a key to understanding reality; one saw a path to
ultimate truth by way of meditation and immediate insight.

When Ricci reached China in the latter part of the sixteenth cen-
tury, the government of the Ming dynasty was marked by growing
administrative weakness and political instability. There was a con-
spicuous lack of confidence between the emperor and high-ranking
officials, and there were cases of notorious injustice in public life.[17]
As the decades passed there developed a fear that the prevailing
social and political disquiet would breed dissidence, as indeed it
did. At the time there was considerable evidence from China's
earlier dynastic history to show that such divisive tendencies could
easily grow from China's secret societies and their Messianic move-
ments; before now dynasties had been threatened and disrupted by

self-styled masters of truth, armed with an understanding of the secrets of divine power.[18] For this reason suspicion could well be the first reaction to greet newcomers from distant lands and cultures who proclaimed themselves to be propagators of the one and only true faith. Indeed, from the Chinese point of view, such fears were to be by no means dismissed as groundless. The revolutionary movement that all but destroyed the Ch'ing dynasty in the 1850s was mounted by a Messianic leader who claimed to be the brother incarnate of Jesus of Nazareth; the Boxer Uprising of 1900 stemmed from the enthusiasm of one of the secret societies.[19]

III. Matteo Ricci's methods and immediate points of conflict

It was no fault of Ricci and his colleagues that they were necessarily ignorant of much of the cultural, religious and intellectual background of the Chinese onto whose soil they stepped. What distinguished the Jesuits from other groups is their willingness to take a long-term view of their mission, measuring its success in terms of decades rather than years, and their realisation that it would be necessary to argue with some of the Chinese whom they met on their own terms, and in the light of their own beliefs, literature and history. Ricci determined to win the respect of Chinese scholars and officials in intellectual terms in two ways. He set out to acquire a familarity with those aspects of Chinese culture in which they had been professionally trained, so that he could bring references to traditional Chinese literature to bear in his arguments. At the same time he strove to impress his Chinese friends with the achievements of the western intellect. He would first win the minds of the Chinese; he would then proceed to win their hearts and their souls. In addition to his highly successful study of Chinese language and the Confucian classics, he and his successors laid considerable store in demonstrating the results of European astronomy and mathematics and the value of the instruments, maps and clocks which they presented to the Chinese court.

Once he had gained the intellectual respect of the Chinese, Ricci would start to preach his doctrines, avoiding unnecessary conflict with Chinese tradition and questions of dogma that would spark off

controversy. He would interpret the terms used in Chinese classical texts as elements of Christian doctrine where this would be appropriate; and he would hope to refrain from discussion of Chinese expressions that might give offence to Chinese men of letters. By this means he was hoping to show an identity of basic Christian ideas with those of Confucianism, before native Chinese thought had been perverted by Buddhism or debilitated by undue reliance on meditation as the most sure path to truth.

Ricci achieved a limited success in converting some high-ranking officials[20] and he hoped that he could proceed therefrom, given time, to win the souls of many more who would have profited from their example. However, some intellectuals reacted critically in a hostile manner against his new teachings;[21] some distrusted the claims made on behalf of European science; and particular difficulties gave rise to conflict in three basic respects: the maintenance of the traditional Chinese observances, or Rites; Chinese concepts of the principle of being; and the choice of a Chinese term to render the term 'Deus'.

(a) *The Rites*. The point at issue here was whether Chinese converts to Catholicism should still be allowed to maintain their traditional observances to their ancestral shrines or to specially venerated or even 'sanctified' figures such as Confucius. These rites, which could include the presentation of offerings, constituted an essential part in the mourning ceremonies of Chinese families and fulfilled the social function of perpetuating the clan and the family's identity. It was in this respect that the Jesuits were perhaps at their most tolerant or accomodating. They held that these practices were permissible as they did not imply the worship of a deity in a spiritual sense, or a belief that the souls of the deceased ancestors inhabited the wooden tablets on which their names had been inscribed and which were reverently preserved in the family shrine. Ricci was prepared to accept these rites as a recognition of social origins and obligations, in terms of the respect due to human beings. This view met with a direct challenge from Dominican and Franciscan missionaries and gave rise to a long drawn out controversy that lasted until 1742 (see the Appendix below).

(b) *The principle of being*. The expression *T'ai-chi*, which is translated as 'Great Ultimate' or 'Supreme Ultimate' appears in

Chinese philosophy to connote the source of activity and being. The term has an ancient origin, being found in writings that date perhaps before the start of the Christian era, but it was in the system of the Neo-Confucians, of the eleventh century and later, that *T'ai-chi* features specifically, in metaphysical terms, as the single principle of reality. Ricci perceived a danger here, in the sense that the 'Supreme Ultimate' could be regarded as equivalent to some aspects of the creative deity of his own faith. He sought to avert this danger by showing that *T'ai-chi* was a comparatively new expression in Chinese, corresponding to 'prime matter', and in no sense to a spirit or being that possessed its own power of understanding.[22] Ricci explains that he was taking care to avoid this issue becoming a bone of contention with the Chinese whom he met.

(c) *The rendering of 'Deus'*. As part of his strategy, Ricci adopted the policy of taking over or even exploiting the ideas and expressions of Chinese classical tradition, so as to demonstrate that Chinese culture had originally included a belief in ideas that were Christian.[23] It was in this way that he fastened on the two expressions *Shang-ti*, or 'Sovereign on High', and *T'ien*, 'Heaven' as evidence of Chinese belief in a single deity; both of these terms recur in early literature, in connection with the religious rites performed by some of China's earliest monarchs, before the imperial period had started (i.e. before 221 BCE). At the outset of his mission, in 1583, Ricci chose the term *T'ien chu*, 'Master of Heaven' to render 'God'.[24] But at the suggestion of some friendly Chinese he later tended to use the term *Shang-ti*, believing the two terms to be synonymous for his purposes.

The question, however, was far from being settled. A conference of missionaries of various orders which was held in 1628 proscribed the use of *Shang-ti* except where it had occurred in Ricci's own writings, and determined that *T'ien chu* should be used by the Catholic church. Later on the Protestants would be settling in favour of *Shang-ti*. In the meantime the Jewish community of K'ai-feng had made use of both expressions in their inscriptions.[25]

But whatever terms were adopted for this highly important purpose, there was room for misunderstanding on both sides. In equating the concept of *Shang-ti* or *T'ien* with that of the Christian deity, Ricci and his colleagues were prudently refraining from

theological implications or arguments. But by doing so, and by securing Chinese acceptance of Christian ideas thereby, the missionaries probably did not appreciate how far the Chinese understanding of a Christian God was at variance with the principle of monotheism. In time, as the missionaries became more sophisticated, they may have realised that Ricci's solution was not free of hazard; and some of the Chinese who wished to attack the Christian mission could accuse Ricci of sailing under false colours or practising a deliberate act of deception.

The reasons for this confusion are not far to seek. When Ricci used the terms 'Master of Heaven' or 'Sovereign on high', he had in mind the idea of a single, omnipotent and omniscient God, with whom each individual soul could establish a relationship, thanks to the intermediacy of Jesus. For the Chinese there could be no such implication of singularity. For them there was the age-old traditional worship of *ti* or *Shang-ti* as the superior member of a group of spirits; he was the arbiter and leader of a company in which the souls of deceased kings came to take part as equals. At a later stage the term *ti* was used in reference to five specific powers whose spheres of influence were limited to particular periods of time, or areas or phases of existence. Similarly, the Chinese concept of *T'ien* could hardly correspond with the God of Christianity. *T'ien* had started as a personified anthropomorphic godhead worshipped by some of the people of the west. In the hands of the philosophers, *T'ien* perhaps signified the mind that lay behind one of the three co-existing powers or estates of the universe, the other two being earth and man. While in such a context *T'ien* could sometimes seem to be the source of creative processes, it had no personal relationship with the great majority of mankind. Finally, however, *T'ien* had assumed a central part in the imperial state cult, being a deity to whom the emperor alone was entitled to address communications. *T'ien* stood now in a specific relationship to the emperor, and was capable of authorising his exercise of rule, or, alternatively, of withdrawing such support. The annual services performed at the majestic site of the Temple of Heaven served to strengthen the link between spiritual and temporal authority. Thus, while to Christians the worship of God was a duty imposed on all mankind, a relationship with *T'ien* was strictly reserved for one individual alone.

IV. Conflict with the Chinese traditions

It is evident that Ricci was fully alive to the danger of insisting on a series of points of dogma which allowed no room for compromise. For this reason he made no deliberate attempts to define the differences between the Christian and the Chinese views of the universe, despite the risk of confusion and perplexity. That such dangers could exist was only too apparent, at least to those who are able to look on the question with hindsight. As has been observed, *Ti*, as seen in the expression *Shang-ti*, was to the Chinese one of the multiplicity of powers that were linked with temporal matters. Thus the age-old precept 'Serve *Shang-ti*, the sovereign on high with respect', seen in some of the earliest Chinese literature and venerated in Confucian thought,[26] bore this worldly connotations, as well as implications for the service of king and later emperor; in Christian hands the precept would be a command to serve one unseen God. Similarly confusion would arise in respect of ideas of salvation, which meant very different things to the catholic mind and to those nurtured in the Buddhist faith. Moreover there was a deep gulf between a Christian idea of sin and moral iniquities, and the Chinese concept of the guilt that accompanied crime. Unrestricted use of Chinese vocabulary could unwittingly carry with it implications that were at variance with Christian belief.

It was perhaps in realisation of the attendant risks that the early missionaries refrained from explaining certain basic characteristics and principles, such as that of the divine creation, a personal relationship between God and man, and the distinction between spirit and substance. Had they not so refrained they might well have encountered the full force of Chinese philosophical and religious tradition in its various forms. There may be a hint of Ricci's recognition of these difficulties in the shock that he evidently felt at the absence in Chinese thought of the concept of a single path to truth, and at the failure of Chinese to distinguish between spiritual and temporal in a manner that was basic to Christianity.

One further fundamental difference needs brief attention. European theology and philosophy could hardly have started without a clear distinction between faith and reason. Ricci preached with a whole history of conflict on this point behind him, together with the reconciliation effected by St Thomas Aquinas. In the Chinese

framework, however, if one may generalise, there was no such basic confrontation, faith and reason being accorded full scope to complement one another. Much of the Chinese intellect had been nurtured on the need to balance the demands of human discipline and organisation with a personal, mystical search for *tao*, the unseen but pervasive order of the universe. Tensions certainly did arise; but when they did so they did not carry doctrinal implications.

For some matters Ricci could not refuse to offer explanation and teaching; the unavoidable necessity of discussing the nature and characteristics of God encountered difficulties, however hard the missionaries tried to avoid abstractions. The Confucian attitude to life was essentially this-worldly, and their intellectual efforts were directed towards the improvement of man's lot on earth. While it would be agreed that due service should be rendered to the spirits, whose existence could not be ignored in Chinese mythology, it was not thought necessary, or even possible, to identify those powers, let alone the all important concept of Heaven, with any precision. Those Chinese who favoured a Taoist approach to life would certainly acknowledge the profound impact made by unseen powers of the universe; but they would also hold that ordinary human beings are incapable of penetrating to a comprehension of their nature; only a few specially gifted persons, who had attained a mastery of ultimate realities, might be able to do so.

In such circumstances Ricci would be obliged to discourse on the nature of God and the concept of the Trinity, and it is hardly surprising that confusion crept in together with a failure to distinguish between God the father and his son. There was also a further difficulty in explaining Christian concepts to Chinese who had been educated in the sophisticated tems of Neo-Confucian thought of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Neither the Chinese ideas of reality not the Buddhist ideals of permanency could conceive how a Christian God, invested with the particular qualities and characteristics of the present relative world, could be regarded as partaking of an absolute existence.

Similarly the idea of incarnation presented fundamental difficulties, in reconciling an eternal absolute being of perfection with personal experiences and passions that were of a transitory nature.

In the prevailing confusion in the Chinese mind between the figures
of God and Jesus, there was room to doubt whether the eternal
experience of God could be compatible with a single historical and
temporary incident. The idea of birth from a virgin mother pro-
voked sarcastic comment, even though Chinese tradition included
in its own repertoire tales of miraculous pregnancies that resulted
in the birth of the progenitors of two famous dynasties.[27]

Taoist tradition and Chinese mythology could certainly accept
the idea of the interchange of material and spiritual elements.
Incarnation of a godhead would be explicable in Buddhist terms as
part of the universal process of rebirth and existence in different
forms, but not as a single and exceptional incident, charged with
a purpose that was to effect all mankind. To the more practically
minded Chinese of a Confucian upbringing, the Passion could not
be acceptable as part of religious truth. The figure of Jesus was por-
trayed as omnipotent, but this concept was limited by his transitory
appearance on earth for a few years from the reign of Han Ai-ti
(reigned 7-1 BCE). In addition, Confucian scholars were first and
foremost officials of state, whose prime duty lay in maintaining the
peace and security of the empire. They could well understand how
a provincial official was justified in punishing or eliminating a
potential threat to the realm, and reference has been made above
to the distrust that they had learnt to harbour for any Messianic
movement. To some extent the Confucian scholars and officials
might regard the missionaries as deceptive, in their attempt to
display a justifiable punishment of a criminal as a manifestation of
divine powers. The idea of an incarnate god willingly submitting
himself to crucifixion was unthinkable. Similarly the idea of an
intermediary engaged in supplicating a supreme deity on behalf of
man would not have fitted any traditional Chinese concept of Con-
fucian or Taoist origin.

The Christian view of the nature of man and his relation to
morality was at variance with Confucian, or more precisely Neo-
Confucian, ideas. As against the assertion that man is distinguished
from other creatures by his faculty of reasoning, the Confucian
teachers fastened on the evolution and practice of ethical virtues as
the hall-mark that separated human beings from animal creatures.
Ricci however made it clear that standards of behaviour take

second place to adherence to faith. A further obvious and deep difference concerned the source of ethical values; for Ricci this came from God, by way of revelation, whereas in traditional Confucian teaching the rules of conduct were imparted by the sages, or supermen, as a means of regulating and organising mankind; as Chinese thought developed, greater stress came to be laid on the human origin of the rules of behaviour. From the Taoist point of view, such rules and means of guidance were in any case not to be trusted; for they could only be of a subjective nature, and if abused they could run counter to the principles that should be allowed to operate throughout the universe without human interference.

Similarly the sharp distinction that is drawn in Christianity between spiritual and temporal, sacred and profane, could not fit the Chinese view of a pantheist universe, wherein all matter could be informed by elements of the sacred. In Neo-Confucian metaphysics there was an essential complementarity between *li* (order, pattern, form) and *ch'i* (energy, substance) which could be discerned thoughout the created world; *tao*, natural order, exists in many forms and is to be perceived in material manifestation.

Some of the Chinese with whom Ricci came into contact would probably have believed in the moral value of spontaneous action rather than that of action determined after a deliberate decision. Ricci however insisted on the importance of intention, when judging the morality of a particular action. Confucians thought in terms of the constant duty of the individual to improve his standards of behaviour, extending his relations with his fellow men so as to reach the most noble and generous pitch that would be possible. Even more clearly, Chinese Buddhists interpreted daily life and its activities in the terms of a progress towards higher forms. It is however questionable whether Ricci would have seen self-perfection as an aim in itself. Christian moral austerities were designed to seek a pardon from God and the salvation of the soul; Chinese moral exercises were intended to achieve self-improvement along ascending stages. A further distinction may be seen in ethical priorities; to Confucian thought, service to parents and family was constantly being stressed as one of the cardinal duties of man; to a Catholic missionary, service to God must always come first.

The attitude towards creation was fundamentally different. The Judaeo-Christian tradition started by asserting the single act or process of creation, and went on to draw a distinction for all time between creator and created. As against this principle, Chinese thought fastened on the explanation of matter as proceeding through the eternal cycle of birth, death and rebirth; creation was seen as a continuous evolutionary process, with no purposeful act of creation being involved.[28] The Christian view was coloured by the Aristotelian idea of the static nature of the universe; the Chinese view rested on belief in a constantly operating dynamic process and movement of matter.

Ideas of immortality had long exercised the minds of both cultures. In the certainty with which it held out a promise of individual immortality of the soul, Christianity was making a new departure; and with this there was bound up the distinction between human beings who are endowed with immortal souls and are open to salvation, and animals who enjoy no such endowment. Chinese attitudes towards immortality were somewhat different; and whereas some of the ideas that had emerged from even before the Christian era were possible contradictory, many Chinese were able to retain a respect for different paths to a future life without apparent difficulty. There was however a deep gulf between the Christian essential separation of soul and body, and the Taoist belief in the unitary nature of man, comprising soul and body together.

The *Huai-nan-tzu*, which is one of the earliest writings that sprang from Taoist natural philosophy, was completed by 139 BCE. The work takes the view that man is but one of the myriad objects of creation, and that there is no fundamental difference with animals such as would affect possibility of a life in the world to come. The question did not obtrude vitally in the different concepts of a paradise that were taking shape, and which provided the symbols that recur in a high proportion of pre-Buddhist Chinese art. Traditionally Chinese looked to a paradise either of the west or of the east, in which the non-material parts of an individual could take part. There was also an idea of a life spent in the company of immortal beings, portrayed sometimes in human, or in animal or in hybrid form. In addition to the beliefs traced back to early

Chinese mythology, a number of exercises or disciplines had been devised in order to ensure life everlasting, or sometimes to preserve the body intact for the soul's inhabitation.[29]

Some of these practices were taken over by the Taoist religious communities, whose visions of a hereafter and of appropriate measures to secure happiness were extended in a variety of ways. Taoist thought included ideas of hell that may have borne a superficial affinity to some Christian ideas. However a notable difference may be observed. Usually it is Chinese thought which tends to evolve hierarchies and classification somewhat more rigidly or mechanically than the west. In this respect, however, we find the missionaries writing of five different types of fate that await the human soul, ranging from the prison of hell to the paradise of heaven. Hell was the destination of wicked men, past and present, and of the devils, and between the two extremes there was room for souls of the saints who had reached their destination thanks to the intervention of Jesus.[30] For Chinese officials and writers such a scheme was essentially flawed. It necessarily relegated to severe punishment some of the notable leaders of China's mythology and history, who were regarded as paragons of ethical behaviour. There was no reason, in Chinese thought, why king Wen of the blessed house of Chou should be sent to hell for the sin of keeping concubines; such behaviour was in no way sinful in Chinese eyes.

The doctrine of the fall of man and original sin gave rise to difficulties. In Taoist writings[31] about the state of the universe there was a counterpart of a sort, but this was by no means completely applicable. It referred to the disruption that might occur in the balance and processes of nature; this would be due to human greed in making excessive demands on the resources of the world and failing to respect the integral part that each type of creature plays in the world; as a result there would arise a loss of harmony, and natural catastrophes. But according to Taoist thought, there would be no question of condemning unborn generations of the future to punishment on account of acts committed by their unidentified ancestors. The Christian view of Adam's fall runs counter to the Confucian view of the gradual development of human capacity, brought about by man's own efforts and the guidance of his culture heroes.

Just as Chinese thought had no concept of the perfection of God, so, except for a few individual philosophers, it was not prepared to accept that man is essentially corrupt.[32] As against the Confucian view that man is endowed from birth with the capacity of spontaneous goodness, there was the Christian belief that goodness could be achieved by some mortals thanks to divine grace and the mastery of their own weaknesses. The Confucian stress on the improvement of character and behaviour by means of precept and training cannot assume an ineradicable state of human evil.

There were in fact basic differences in the views of wickedness. To Ricci, sin consisted of faults committed against God; to Chinese officials, guilt was the lot of those who committed crimes against humanity in defiance of the canons of Confucian convention, imperal guidance and the laws of the state. To Buddhists, an individual's inadequacies would accumulate to the point of constituting bad *kharma*. In such circumstances, there were some Chinese who were quick to question Christian teaching in regard to evil; they could not understand how the idea of an omniscient God could be reconciled with freedom for his created beings to commit eternally damning sins. There was an obvious apparent contrast with the eternal compassion ascribed to the Buddha, and it was not possible to accept the justice of the punishment of all mankind in return for a single act of disobedience.

There was a further, practical dimension to this problem, in the promise of forgiveness for the repentant sinner. To Chinese officials this possibility could spell the upset of the moral and social order of which they stood as guardians. For, if taken to all lengths, the practice of confession and absolution could lead to a toleration of banditry; officials who failed to preserve the Chinese people from such malevolence were themselves failing in their duties and could be liable to the punishments of state. This danger was by no means theoretical only. There are cases in Chinese history of protests which were made against the too frequent promulgation of imperial amnesties, for the very reason that they were provocative of crime.[33]

It has been noted that it was part of Ricci's strategy to impress his Chinese hosts with the skill attained in European, and therefore Christian, science and technology. The missionaries' gifts of

instruments, their solution of problems and their accurate predic-
tion of eclipses produced results that were highly gratifying, as well
as some sceptical criticism or perhaps professional jealousy.[34] But
here again there were conflicts with some aspects of Chinese theory
and practice.

Ricci arrived in China in 1583. At that time the European
attitude to scientific observation was that of a study that would
verify God's word, as revealed in Holy Scripture, and as
manifested in the world about us. The purpose of astronomy was
thus to elucidate the workings and powers of the Almighty; while
for a time it was possible for the Jesuits to accept and even pro-
pagate the Copernican theory, eventually they were obliged to
revert to the orthodox geocentric view of the universe.[35] For
Chinese officials the function of astronomy was to indicate the cur-
rent relationship between the three Estates of Heaven, Earth and
Man, and to expose any loss of harmony in the universe; for them,
there was an intimate association between the movements of the
heavenly bodies and the organisation and destiny of man.

There was a further difference in the concept of time. To the mis-
sionaries this was linear, with all events leading up to the Passion,
and thereafter moving away from it; to Chinese scholars versed in
their own tradition, events and processes were seen to follow one
another in ever-repeating cyclical fashion.[36] In addition the Jesuits'
idea of time was probably more circumscribed than that of Chinese
historians and philosophers. Living shortly before the time of
Bishop Ussher (1581-1656), Ricci may well have viewed time as
bounded by the statements of Genesis; some of his colleagues were
to put forward the view that China had been populated by the
descendants of Noah after the flood, which Bishop Ussher was to
date at 2348 BCE.[37] The Chinese however were accustomed to look
back to the remote mists of antiquity, without necessarily being
bothered about the niceties of chronology. To them, the
appearance of a saviour of the world in the reign of the last but one
emperor of Former Han was a comparatively recent event, long
after the most glorious days of Chinese history, and not capable of
universal, paramount significance.

The Chinese view of the cosmos was not that of a system
deliberately created by an omniscient and omnipotent God; it was

rather that of infinite space within which activities were regulated
by permanent cyclical processes; alternate rhythms were at work,
each with its own source and exertion of energy, the fount of such
energy being impersonal.[38] The Chinese were delighted to welcome
the Jesuits' instruments and methods of calculation, in so far as
these would be a more accurate means of measuring space and
time. But a possible source of conflict existed when questions of the
calendar arose. As regulation of the calendar had been a jealously
guarded imperial monopoly for up to 2000 years, there was
naturally a fundamental resentment at the pretensions of others,
particularly foreigners, to question this privilege.[39]

There was also room for argument on the practical side. The
Jesuits worked with a professional, scientific approach to accuracy,
intent on producing a regulated solar calendar; the Chinese tradi-
tion of a lunisolar calendar was bound up with the attempts to
reconcile several different cycles of being thought to inform the
cosmos (i.e., those of 5, 12, 28 and 64); and the calendar was
intimately associated with the expression of imperial authority and
the management of the daily working lives of the population.

V. The attitude towards Buddhism

Like Christianity, Buddhism was a faith brought to China from
another culture; unlike Christianity, by the sixteenth century it had
already sojourned there for long. There had been times when Bud-
dhism had thrived under imperial patronage, times when it had
faced proscription owing to the jealousies that it had aroused.
Although there were some conflicts with other religions in matters
of belief and with the Confucian emphasis on certain modes of
behaviour, on the whole Buddhism had been accepted as a religious
society with its own ethical ideals. Chinese imperial governments
were generally well-disposed and ready to tolerate the faith, pro-
vided that it did not pose a threat to the emperor's legitimate
authority or exercise of power. The Buddhist monasteries faced
criticism if they appeared to be accumulating undue wealth; their
practices were tolerated as long as they did not preclude the
religious rites of Chinese clan and kinship. On the face of it there
appeared to be considerable affinity between the Christian and the

Buddhist outlook; both faiths set their eyes on otherworldly values; both sought individual salvation; and the moral injunctions of the two religions were, if not identical, largely similar.

As has been mentioned, Ricci had started by posing as a Buddhist priest, in the hope of gaining recognition of his mission as a man of religion. But he soon abandoned this guise, when he realized that Buddhist priests as such had little influence among the court or the men of letters whose souls he wished to win. The incident brings out two characteristics of Ricci's grand strategy: his willingness to compromise or accommodate so as to meet the preconceptions of those whom he wished to convert; and his acceptance that, in certain circumstances, the end justified the means. Both of these attitudes were apparent in the Jesuits' attitude towards the question of the Rites.

But we soon hear of Ricci's active antagonism to Buddhism. This was at a time when there were strong anti-Buddhist feelings at the court, and Ricci was doubtless aware of the favourable impression that he would create if he were to show himself as being on the court's side in this respect. His knowledge of Buddhism was probably restricted to what he had observed in his travels in the temples or monasteries of the provinces; it is unlikely that he had had opportunity to acquire an understanding of Buddhist metaphysics or an appreciation of the depth of Buddhist principles. Shortly he was propagating the view that it was ancient Chinese religion that had borne a number of features identical with those of Christianity; but this original purity had been lost thanks to the perversion introduced by Buddhism; and this should be categorised as idolatry. He further maintained that the apparent resemblances between Christian and Buddhist belief were illusory, being the invention of the devil.[40]

The Buddhist reaction to the arrival and activities of Catholic missionaries was not altogether different. They castigated the missionaries for arrogance, in their belief that they stood possessed of the only way towards and salvation.[41] Such arrogance was underlined by their failure to answer the metaphysical arguments that Buddhist priests put forward; and it was clear that they possessed no knowledge of the elementary principles of the faith. On a different plane, Buddhist priests found a marked difficulty in

comprehending the idea of a personal God, when so much of their own discipline was aimed at the abnegation or elimination of self. They could not see how the Christian God possessed any attributes of transcendence, in so far as there were always explained in relative terms. To the Buddhist, the Christian had little under-standing of reality and unreality.

On a somewhat lower level, the charge was raised that the Christians had deliberately adopted and perverted some doctrines that were fundamentally Buddhist; and an official view that was some-times expressed saw Christianity as no more than a perverted form of Buddhism. In this respect it is of interest to note a pertinent ques-tion which the Yung-cheng emperor (reigned 1723 to 1735) put to one of Ricci's successors. He asked what sort of reception would await any propagators of Buddhism that he might care to send to spread their faith in the royal courts of Europe's eighteenth century.[42]

VI. Popular practices

There were occasions when the holy fathers, so far from finding themselves in comfortable discourse with men of letters or listening to an exposé of the Confucian tradition, were brought face to face with the realities of popular religion. Ricci himself must have witnessed much of this in the course of his long journeyings up and down the length of China.[43] In such circumstances they could hardly have shut their eyes to some of the practices of village, hovel and slum that lay open before them; and these could hardly be regarded as part of that pure original religion that they claimed had been polluted by Buddhism. Had they looked far, they would have seen living evidence of beliefs in miracles, rites and exorcism, wor-ship of images, practice of divination and acts of healing performed by holy men. In such practices there was no insistence on dogmatic belief such as characterised their own religion; and the missionaries would have seen for themselves the absence in popular religion of any thought that there can be one and only one way to truth and purity.

The Jesuits and others may well have been mystified by the popular Chinese concept of their gods and the treatment to which

they subjected them. These were the images of a polytheistic system, retained in the home to be supplicated in time of need; and should they fail to provide the relief or the protection that was required, or to assure the success that was desired, they would be castigated; or they could be punished physically, and finally expelled or smashed. Such gods had hardly been invested with a spiritual nature; worshippers sought to exploit any powers that they were thought to possess over material objects and considerations. They were treated almost on terms of equality with human beings, and replaced by other objects if they were tried and found wanting.

To the popular Chinese mind the powers of these gods were strictly limited to particular spheres of activity; there was no comprehension of a monotheist point of view, or idea of a jealous god unable to tolerate the thought of other deities. Possibly the Jesuits failed to appreciate the difficulty of substituting a single Christian God to replace all these objects of worship, arrayed, in typical Chinese fashion in their hierarchies.[44]

Certain instruments of religion such as relics, holy paintings and holy water had their own place within Catholic practice. The missionaries then can hardly have been surprised to observe a Chinese addiction to ceremonies and a trust in the efficacy of material objects, or the recitation of formulae, to achieve miraculous results. For their part they realised that such practices could help their own cause, and we hear of the use that the missionaries made of Italian religious paintings, or the recitation of Latin formulae to show evidence of their own powers. On occasion they would point to the incorrupt state of the bodies of some of the deceased Church fathers, the cure of diseases or the intervention of the virgin to ease childbirth.[45] In so doing, however, the missionaries were laying themselves open to misinterpretation; for they were making precisely the same sort of claims that were being made by the leaders of the popular cults, and the Chinese regarded Christian undertakings of this sort as being no different from those of other masters of the occult.

The success of the Catholic mission was sometimes measured in terms of the number of those who had accepted baptism and thereby undergone conversion. However there is some reason to doubt whether such converts had necessarily accepted the fun-

damental principles of Christianity and whether the conversion was
due to conscience or convenience. There were cases when baptism
took place after a convert's recitation of what he had learnt of
Christian doctrine, and there may be reason to show that such ideas
were at times gravely and irredeemably confused.[46] There were also
cases wherein baptism was administered to a group rather than
individually, e.g., to all members of a family or village. Such a pro-
cedure was well suited to the traditional solidarity of the Chinese
clan and its stress on the community rather than the individual; but
it did not necessarily guarantee that the converts had awaited a
spiritual experience and conviction before accepting baptism.
Sometimes conversion may have occurred after a miracle which
was ascribed to the intervention of Christian powers; to Chinese
eyes such events were little different from similar activities over
which other masters, priests or intermediaries had presided.

There were also aspects of popular religion to which both Confu-
cian teachers and Christian missionaries took grave exception.
Confucian thought frowned on practices that savoured of the
uncontrollable impulses of a community that had not been subject
of the civilising influence of Chinese society; the Catholic reaction
to such practices, e.g. exorcism, or certain forms of geomancy was
appropriate to what was regarded as superstition.[47] There was how-
ever some danger that the orthodox Confucian reaction to some of
the Christian rites (e.g., baptism itself, confession, absolution or
the repetition of prayers) would have been little different from the
reaction to some of the rites performed by the unassimilated peoples
of China's hinterland.

VII. Concluding summary

All credit is due to Father Matteo Ricci, his colleagues and their
successors, for their determination to understand the nature of
Chinese civilisation and the religious and intellectual climate of
those whose souls they were hoping to save. Their initiative in
appreciating that Chinese culture had its own achievements which
could not be dismissed as the aberrations of a savage paganism
stands in marked contrast to the attitude of some of the other
orders.[48] However the Jesuits' attempts to plumb the depth and

subtleties of Chinese civilisation were severely hampered, to some extent for reasons which they could not possibly foresee or counter. The Chinese teachers and informants to whom they turned and the officials with whom they conversed were mainly officials of government and denizens of the court. They had been born and bred in the orthodox tradition of Chinese culture; and while they were most erudite in this respect, they had received no training in some of the intellectual habits that were second nature to educated Europeans of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In some ways, then, no meeting of minds could have been possible. In addition the informants on whom the Catholic missionaries depended would not have been over generous in their assessment or description of Buddhist practice, or able to comprehend all the arcane mysteries of Buddhist doctrine. Their instinct was to conceal from the prying eyes of the foreigner the less reputable legacies of popular religion and folklore.

The Chinese toleration of missionary activity depended much on the visitors' skills as scientists and on the assurance that they could give that Christian doctrine did not militate against Chinese morals or Chinese claims for sovereignty. The success that the missionaries could claim in these respects varied; the criticism that they encountered was sometimes bitter. At best, the holy fathers were able to exchange arguments with distinguished Chinese scholars or even to convert high ranking officials; and on occasion they would converse with emperors.[49] If they won the trust of their hosts, they might be invited to serve in high places in Chinese government, and in this way Father Schall served as Director of the Astronomical Bureau in the Ch'ing court (1645-66). A different reception could await them, however, if their calculations of an eclipse proved to be faulty, or if their teachings were judged likely to stir up dissidence in the provinces. An interesting contrast may be seen in these relations in two incidents. Father Schall saw nothing un-Christian in directing the manufacture of cannon on behalf of a Ming emperor; Fabian Fucan, a Japanese convert to Catholicism who later turned apostate, and violently anti-Catholic, saw the remission of sins as an instigation to crime and banditry.[50]

Despite the varied fate that it had suffered over the centuries, and the criticism that it was facing in high places at the time, Buddhism

was of greater importance in the sixteenth century and later than the missionaries were willing to recognise; their characterisation of this faith as superstitious idolatry was unworthy and arrogant, understandable as it may have been. In their attempts to show that some of the discernible good points of Buddhist teaching had been borrowed from Christianity, the Jesuits should have taken warning from considerations of history. It is understandable that they could not contemplate the existence of another and an older faith that claimed an equally valid path to an understanding of ultimate reality; but it was inappropriate and ungenerous. After their preliminary attempts to pass themselves off as Buddhist priests, the Jesuits could hardly complain if they were sometimes regarded in identical terms, as leaders of a minor sect of the same ilk.

If judgement has to be passed, it would have to be concluded that in general terms the grand strategy of the Jesuit missionaries was not successful, despite some notable cases of conversion and the considerable contribution that they made to Chinese culture. The failure was due mainly to irreconcilable differences of intellectual outlook and to the inherent dangers of the tactics that were adopted. The missionaries could not realise that monotheism is a very peculiar idea in Chinese eyes, and that in the sophisticated state of Chinese civilisation which confronted them it was bound to remain exceptional. They were misled, or misled themselves, into thinking that the common people of China would be willing to sacrifice their traditional objects of worship in favour of a single omnipotent God. However much they sought to show that the basic ideas of Christianity were to be found in classical Chinese literature, such references could not stand against the age-old worship, cajolery and punishment of localized deities, who were treated almost as members of the family.

By their tactics of accommodation, their tolerance of Chinese rites and their deliberate search for evidence of Christian principles in traditional pre-Christian texts, the Jesuits may well have made a grave long-term error; in the medium term these policies may have formed reason for the charge which came to be levelled against them, that they accepted that the end can justify the means. Although the adoption of Chinese terms to express their ideas could not be avoided, it was also hazardous, as it would lead to a

restricted or a confused idea of Catholic doctrine; the terms which were used to explain the new faith could not help but evoke some of the well-seated beliefs of Chinese tradition.

Some of the conversions that the fathers achieved undoubtedly sincere; the validity of some must remain open to question. It cannot be claimed that the Jesuits filled a void in Chinese religion; nor did they affect China's destiny or policies. One permanent result of the missions was the introduction of Chinese culture to the eyes and ears of the west with a new depth of knowledge; this is exemplified in the publication in Amsterdam, in 1655, of the *Novus Atlas Sinensis*, by Father Martino Martini, S. J.

Appendix: The Rites controversy

Both doctrinal and professional elements may be detected in this controversy which raged for about a century, raising doubts and suspicions from both the Catholic and the Chinese sides. The Chinese were not vitally concerned over the principle of accommodation for reasons of intellectual integrity; for it had long been possible for men of letters to accept elements of a variety of faiths and to retain room for conflicting beliefs, without necessarily being racked by conscience. Their concern sprang from the potential threat to the imperial and social order. There was a marked refusal to tolerate any limitation of imperial sovereignty; any challenge to traditional Chinese ethical concepts and practices likewise provoked resentment.

On the Christian side, the main objections to Ricci's strategy came from the Dominican and Franciscan orders, who could not tolerate a compromise of this magnitude, and referred the question to their superiors. Possibly in so doing they misrepresented the Jesuits as being more ready to tolerate certain practices than they actually were. It is also likely that the Jesuits' impression of some of the rites, as seen in the rarified atmosphere of the capital city, was somewhat different from that of the Dominicans who may have witnessed more crude and vulgarised performances at a popular level.

In professional terms the controversy involved questions of the jurisdiction and control of missionary activity, as between the rival ambitions of different orders. Rome was anxious to assert its own

power of jurisdiction, as against that of the Portuguese *Padroãdo*; this had been exercised through the Bishop of Macao, to the advantage of the Jesuits.

The long story of move and counter-move may be summarised as follows:[51]

1645   Pope Innocent X endorsed the Franciscan and Dominican point of view, refusing to accept the degree of accomodation that the rites and the use of terms for 'Deus' implied.

1656   This decision was reversed, with Rome approving the continuation of the rites. This change was due to the presentation of the Jesuits' case by Martino Martini (1614-61), despite the efforts made by the Franciscan Antonio de Santa Maria Caballero (1602-69) and the Dominican Domingo Navarette.

1669   Excellent relations were being enjoyed between the K'ang-hsi emperor (acceded 1662) and the Jesuit Father Verbiest (1623-88), with the Chinese adopting a pronounced policy of tolerance.

1692   K'ang-hsi's edict of toleration, declaring that Christianity should not be prohibited, not being regarded as heretical.

1693   Charles Maigrot, French Vicar-Apostolic of Fukien, reopened the controversy on doctrinal grounds.

1697-1704 A commission of cardinals sat to consider the rites' issue. Rome took the view, despite some hesitation, that accommodation could not be tolerated, thereby arousing angry resentment on the part of the K'ang-hsi emperor. In 1707 the emperor ordered that the right to preach according to Ricci's methods should be controlled by the issue of licences (*p'iao*) to do so. Open conflict was thus apparent between the papacy and K'ang-hsi's authorities.

1717   Chinese re-affirmation of restrictions and control on the right to preach.

1722   With the death of the K'ang-hsi emperor, his successors (the Yung-cheng emperor, reigned 1723-1735, and the Ch'ien-lung emperor reigned 1736-1795) did not share the basic tolerance that had marked the earlier years of

the K'ang-hsi reign. Some measure of persecution took place by confining missionaries either to named centres in the provinces or to Peking, with the imposition of a ban on preaching elsewhere. Some churches were confiscated.

1742   In his papal decree *Ex quo singulari*, Benecit XIV condemned the Rites: 'The Rites are not evil because they are prohibited; they are prohibited because they are evil'.

1773   Suppression of the Jesuit order marked a distinct break in Catholic missionary activity in China.

1939   Roman decree allowed for Christian participation in rituals honouring ancestors and Confucius.

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Notes for further reading

For accounts of the Christian presence in China, see A. C. Moule, *Christians in China before the year 1550*; London: S.P.C.K., 1930, and Kenneth Scott Latourette, *A history of Christians in China*; London: S.P.C.K., 1929. The standard history of Chinese religion (J.J.M. de Groot, *The religious system of China*, 6 vols.; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1892-1910; reprinted Taipei: Literature House, 1964) is generally regarded as being somewhat biassed and out of date, in view of more recent research; see also Marcel Granet, *The Religion of the Chinese People*, first published 1922, translated, edited and with an Introduction by Maurice Freedman; Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1975; Max Weber, *The Religion of China; Confucianism and Taoism*; translated and edited by Hans H. Gerth; New York: the Macmillan Company, 1964; and C. K. Yang, *Religion in Chinese Society*; Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1961. The most informative account of the early days of the Jesuit mission is probably that of Henri Bernard, S.J., *Le Père Matthieu Ricci et la Société Chinoise de son temps*, 2 vols.; Tientsin, 1937. For a recent and detailed assessment of the success of the Jesuits' mission, see Jacques Gernet, *China and the Christian Impact*, translated by Janet Lloyd; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985 (originally published as *Chine et christanisme*; Paris: Editions Gallimard, 1982). Julia Ching considers some of the basic religious and intellectual ideas involved, in *Confucianism and Christianity*; Tokyo: Kodansha International, 1977. In *The Wise Man from the West*: London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1955, Vincent Cronin gives a special account of Matteo Ricci's mission and journeys. See also Jonathan D. Spence, *The Memory Palace of Matteo Ricci*; London; Faber and Faber, 1985 (reviewed by H. R. Trevor-Roper in *The New York Review*, June 13 1985). For an account of the Rites' controversy, see John W. Witek, S.J., 'Catholic missions and the Chinese reaction to Christianity', to be included in *The Cambridge History of China*, vol. 9; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, forthcoming. For the Protestant missions, see John K. Fairbank, ed., *The Cambridge History of China*, vol. 10, pp. 547f., 557f.

¹ See P. Y. Saeki, *The Nestorian Monument in China*; London: S.P.C.K., 1916; Jean Dauvillier and Thérèse Sonneville-David, eds. *Recherches sur les Chrétiens d'Asie centrale d'extrême-Orient* (*Oeuvres posthumes de Paul Pelliot*), vol. II: La Stèle de Si-Ngan Fou; Paris: Éditions de la Fondation Singer-Polignac, 1984. See also Moule, *Christians in China before the year 1550*, pp. 27f.

² For the arrival and acceptance of Buddhism in China and its conflicts with the principles of other religious and the state, see E. Zürcher, *The Buddhist Conquest of China: the spread and adaptation of Buddhism in early Medieval China*, 2 vols.; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1959; and Paul Demiéville in Denis Twitchett and Michael Loewe, eds., *The Cambridge History of China* vol. 1; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986, pp. 820f., 838f., 846f., 868f.

³ See Gabriel Ferrand, *Voyage du Marchand* Arabe Sulaymân en Inde et en Chine rédigé en 851 suivi de remarques par Abu Zayd Ḥasan; Paris: Éditions Bossard, 1922.

⁴ See Denis Twitchett, ed., *The Cambridge History of China* vol. 3; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979, pp. 34, 280; for the suppression of Manichaeism, see p. 669. During the course of a long drought in 799 Manichee priests were ordered by the T'ang government to pray for rain (see *T'ang hui-yao* 49; Peking: Chung-hua shu-chü, 1955, p. 846.)

⁵ See William Woodville Rockhill, *The Journey of William of Rubruck to the Eastern Parts of the World 1253-55 as narrated by himself, with two accounts of the earlier journey of John of Pian de Carpine*; London: Hakluyt Society, 1900. For the standard annotated edition of Marco Polo's writings, see A. C. Moule and Paul Pelliot, *Marco Polo; the description of the world*, 2 vols; London: George Routledge and sons, 1938.

⁶ For the Christian presence at the Mongol court, see Moule, *Christians in China before the year 1550*, pp. 166f., 216f.

⁷ These sources may be considered in four categories: (a) Chinese works by the missionaries on their doctrine and work, and counter arguments by their opponents: e.g., Ricci's own *T'ien-chu shih-i* ('The true meaning of [the doctrine of] the Master of Heaven'), in which he sets out the principles of the faith that he was preaching; English translation by Douglas Lancashire and Peter K Hu Kuo-chen, S.J., as *Matteo Ricci S.J. The True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven* (T'ien-chu Shih-i), in *Variétés Sinologiques*, New Series, published by the Ricci Institute, Taipei, Paris and Hong Kong, 1985. Against this can be set Yang Kuang-hsien (1597-1669), *Pu-te-i*, in which this virulent opponent of the Christian mission includes his views. A collection of anti-Christian works may be found under the title *P'o-hsieh chi*. (b) Accounts of the Jesuit mission in European languages; e.g., Ricci's *Della entrata della Compagnia di Giesù e Christianità*; for the subsequent literary history of this work, see Gernet, *China and the Christian Impact*, pp. 7f. For a further example of a source of this type, see the highly informative *Correspondance de Pékin 1722-59*, of Father Antoine Gaubil; Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1970. (c) Technical works written by missionaries in Chinese. E.g., the many books written by Father Ferdinand Verbiest (1623-88) by way of explanation of the scientific and technical work that he had been undertaking for the Chinese court. A project has been established to collect and publish these documents, under the direction of Professor Libbrecht, Catholic University of Louvain. (d) Missionaries' accounts of Chinese civilisation for dissemination in Europe; e.g. Father Martino Martini, *De bello Tartarico*; Antwerp, 1654; *Novus Atlas Sinensis*; Amsterdam, 1655; *Sinicae historiae decas prima*; Munich, 1658.

⁸ Cited in Gernet, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

⁹ E.g., see E. J. Eitel, *Feng shui*; original edition 1873; reproduced Cambridge: Cockayne, 1973; and J. J. M. de Groot, *The religious system of China*, vol. III, pp. 935f.

¹⁰ For *Shang-ti*, see Henri Maspero, *China in Antiquity*, translated by Frank A. Kierman Jr; Folkestone: Dawson, 1978 (original, French, version 1925); and references in David N. Keightley, *Sources of Shang History; the Oracle-Bone inscriptions of Bronze Age China*; Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: The University of California Press, 1978.

¹¹ I.e., the Altar and Temple of Heaven (*T'ien t'an*), on the south side of Peking.

¹² For Confucius and Confucianism, see Wing-tsit Chan, *A source book in Chinese philosophy*; Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963, especially chapters 2-5; and D. Howard Smith, *Confucius*; London: Temple Smith, 1973.

¹³ For these aspects of Taoism, see Arthur Waley, *Three Ways of Thought in Ancient China*; London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1939; and *The Way and Its Power*; London: George Allen and Unwin, Ltd., 1934; D.C. Lau, *Lao Tzu: Tao te ching*; Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1963; Max Kaltenmark, *Lao Tzu and Taoism*, translated from the French by Roger Greaves; Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1969; and A. C. Graham, *Chuang-tzu: the Seven Inner Chapters and other writings from the Book* Chuang-tzu; London: George Allen and Unwin, 1981.

¹⁴ No complete translation has yet been published of the *Huai-nan-tzu*. Recent translations of select chapters include Roger T. Ames, *The Art of Rulership: a study in Ancient Chinese Political Thought*; Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1983; and Charles Le Blanc, *Huai-nan Tzu; Philosophical Synthesis in Early Han Thought*; Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1985. See also references in Michael Loewe, *Chinese Ideas of Life and Death: Faith Myth and Reason in the Han period* (202 BC-AD 220); London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1982.

¹⁵ Fos aspects of Taoist religion, see Henri Maspero, *Taoism and Chinese Religion*, translated by Frank A. Kierman, Jr.; Amherst: the University of Massachusetts Press, 1981; and Kristofer Schipper, *Le corps Taoïste: corps physique—corps social*; Paris: Fayard, 1982.

¹⁶ For Neo-Confucian thought, see Wing-tsit Chan, *op. cit.*, chapters 27-35; A. C. Graham, *Two Chinese philosophers: Ch'eng Ming-tao and Ch'eng Yi-ch'uan*; London: Lund Humphries, 1958; Carson Chang, *The Development of Neo-Confucian Thought*; London: Vision Press Limited, 1958; vol. Two; New York, Bookman Associates, 1962; and *Reflections on things at Hand; the Neo-Confucian Anthology compiled by Chu Hsi and Lü Tsu-ch'ien*; translated with notes by Wing-tsit Chan; New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1967.

¹⁷ See Ray Huang, *1587; a year of no significance; the Ming dynasty in decline*; New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1981.

¹⁸ The most obvious example of this type of movement which was continually in the forefront of the minds of Chinese officials was the Yellow Turbans' revolt of 184; see Twitchett and Loewe, *Cambridge History of China* vol. 1, pp. 324f., 815f., etc.

¹⁹ For the T'ai-p'ing rebellion, see Latourette, *op. cit.*, pp. 282f., and John K. Fairbank, ed., *The Cambridge History of China*, vol. 10; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978, chapter 6; for the Boxer Uprising, see John K. Fairbank and Kwang-ching Liu, eds., *The Cambridge History of China*, vol. 11; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980, pp. 115f.

²⁰ E.g., Hsü Kuang-ch'i (1562-1633), Li Chih-tsao (baptised 1610; died 1630); Yang T'ing-yün (1557-1627); see entries in Arthur W. Hummel, *Eminent Chinese*

of the Ch'ing period (1644-1912), 2 vols; Washington D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1943-44.

[21] E.g., Shen Ch'üeh (achieved *chin-shih* degree 1592); Yang Kuang-hsien (1597-1669); see entries in Hummel, *op. cit.*,

[22] See Gernet, *op. cit.*, pp. 27, 202; for T'ai-chi the 'Supreme Ultimate', see Wing-tsit Chan, *op. cit.*, pp. 463f.

[23] This principle was later taken to considerable lengths by the 'Figurists', who sought to show how Chinese sources included references to Biblical tradition; see Antoine Gaubil, *Correspondance de Pékin 1722-59*, p. 364; and Paul Demiéville, in *The Cambridge History of China*, vol. 1, p. 863.

[24] E.g., see the title of his work *T'ien-chu shih-lu* (A true account of the Master of Heaven) and *T'ien-chu shih-i* (The true meaning of the [doctrine of the] Master of Heaven).

[25] For the question of terminology adopted in Jewish inscriptions, see Donald Daniel Leslie, *The Survival of the Chinese Jews; the Jewish Community of Kaifeng*; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1972, pp. 97f.; and for specific examples of the use of the term *Shang-ti* in 1656, 1658, see William Charles White, *Chinese Jews; Compilation of Matters Relating to the Jews of K'ai-feng Fu*, second edition with an introduction by Cecil Roth; Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1966, pp. 123, 130. For Protestant usage, see Latourette, *op. cit.*, pp. 262, 432.

[26] References to *Shang-ti*'s relationship to early Chinese monarchs and their service to him are seen in some of the books which were adopted as parts of the classical canon, which formed the basic training for Chinese officials in the imperial age. See, e.g., Bernhard Karlgren, *The Book of Odes*; Stockholm: Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities, 1950, pp. 187-88; and 'The Book of Documents', in *Bulletin of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities*, 22 (1950), 78; see also Gernet, *op. cit.*, p. 193

[27] See Gernet, *op. cit.*, p. 228; for the miraculous conceptions of the progenitions of the royal houses of Yin and Chou, see *Shih-chi* 3, p. 91 and 4, p. 111 (Peking: Chung-hua shu-chü, 1959); translated in Edouard Chavannes, *Les Mémoires Historiques de Se-ma Ts'ien*; Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1895-1905; reprinted Paris: Adrien Maisonneuve, 1967, vol. I, pp. 173f., 209f.

[28] See Gernet, *op. cit.*, pp. 205f.

[29] For Chinese ideas of the after life prior to the entry of Buddhism, see Michael Loewe, *Ways to Paradise; the Chinese Quest for Immortality*; London: George Allen and Unwin, 1979.

[30] Gernet, *op. cit.*, pp. 176, 285 note 175, cites from a catechism published in Chinese in 1648.

[31] E.g., see passages from the *Huai-nan-tzu* (completed in 139 BCE), cited in Michael Loewe, *Chinese Ideas of Life and Death*, pp. 44f., 84.

[32] Considerable attention was paid to this question from early times. The orthodox Confucian view tended to follow that expressed in the *Meng-tzu* (fourth century BCE) to the effect that human nature is basically good, in contrast with the opposite view, as expounded in the *Hsün-tzu* (third century BCE); see Wing-tsit Chan, *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy*, pp. 54, 128-33.

[33] E.g., see Wang Fu (90-165), *Ch'ien-fu lun* 4 (16) 'Shu she'.

[34] See Joseph Needham, *Science and Civilisation in China*, vol. 3; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1959, pp. 442f.; for the work of Fathers Schall and Verbiest and their relations with the Chinese court, see Jonathan Spence, *The China Helpers; Western Advisers in China 1620-1960*; London: The Bodley Head, 1969; pp. 3f.

[35] For the Jesuits' astronomy, see Needham, *op. cit.*, vol. 3, pp. 445f.

[36] With great deference I venture to differ here from the view expressed by Joseph Needham in 'Time and Eastern Man' (Henry Myers Lecture, Royal Anthropological Institute, 1964; in Joseph Needham, *The Grand Titration; Science and Society in East and West*; London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd, 1969).

[37] Gernet, *op. cit.*, p. 129. For Ricci's interest in the evidence for the existence of an early Jewish settlement in China, see Michael Pollak, *Mandarins, Jews, and Missionaries; the Jewish Experience in the Chinese Empire*; Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1980, pp. 3f.

[38] For early Chinese views of cosmology, see Needham *Science and Civilisation in China*, vol. 3, pp. 210f.; see also vol. 2, pp. 232f., for the views of the school of naturalists.

[39] For Chinese appreciation of the Jesuits' skills, see Gernet, *op. cit.*, pp. 57f.; for cases wherein Chinese scholars doubted the accuracy of the Jesuits' calculations and the tests to which they were subjected, see Spence, *The China Helpers*, pp. 10f.; Gernet, *op. cit.*, pp. 13,30; and Witek's forthcoming study.

[40] Gernet, *op. cit.*, p. 75.

[41] Gernet, *op. cit.*, pp. 79f.

[42] See Pollak, *op. cit.*, pp. 131f.

[43] For the extent of these journeys, see Cronin. *The Wise Man from the West.*

[44] Some of these gods were thought to control human activities of a limited and particular type. In this connection, there may be cited the ironic, or tragi-comic, case in which Ricci himself became adopted as the patron saint, or even god, of clock-makers, with the subsequent display of his portrait for veneration; see Gernet, *op. cit.*, p. 83.

[45] See E. Zürcher, 'The Lord of Heaven and the demons; strange stories from a late Ming Christian manuscript' (in *Religion und Philosophie in Ostasien; Festschrift für Hans Steininger zum 65. Geburtstag*, eds. Ger Naundorf, Karl-Heinz Pohl and Hand-Hermann Schmidt, Würzburg: Königshausen und Neumann, 1985, pp. 359-75.), for the evidence of a popular type of Christianity which was practised in south-eastern China, and called on the intervention of miraculous powers as evidence of the faith's efficacy. For the missionaries' use of holy images and other instruments with which to propagate their faith, see Gernet. *op. cit.*, pp. 85f.; for attention to the incorrupt state of Martino Martini's body after death, see Gernet, *op. cit.*, pp. 91f.

[46] See the case of Chung Min-jen (Zhong Minren), as recounted in Gernet, *op. cit.*, pp. 97-8.

[47] Gernet, *op. cit.*, p. 89; for the attitude towards the geomancy, see note (9) above.

[48] E.g., the Dominican and Franciscan orders.

[49] E.g., the Shun-chih emperor (reigned 1644-61, as first emperor of the Ch'ing dynasty) and his successor the K'ang-hsi emperor (reigned 1662-1722) enjoyed personal relationships with Fathers Schall and Verbiest respectively.

[50] For Schall's manufacture of cannon, see Wittek's forthcoming chapter. For Fabian Fukan (or Fucan), who had been trained as a Buddhist novice before being accepted by the Jesuits and finally becoming a virulent critic of Christianity, see Julia Ching, *Confucianism and Christianity; a comparative study*; Tokyo; Kodansha International, 1977, p. 25; Gernet, *op. cit.*, pp. 119, 133f., etc. Fukan's principal anti-Christian polemic, entitled *Ha-Deus* was published in 1620; see Joseph Jennes, *A History of the Catholic Church in Japan from its beginnings to the Early Meiji Era: a short handbook*; revised, enlarged edition; Tokyo: Oriens Institute for

Religious Research, 1973, pp. 100, 133, 174-85. See also C. R. Boxer, *The Christian Century in Japan 1549-1650* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1967), pp. 218 etc. (for Fabian Fukansai).

[51] For accounts of these incidents, see Julia Ching *op. cit.*, pp. 21f.; Pollak, *op. cit.*, pp. 77f.; Witak's forthcoming chaper.; and Latourette, *op. cit.*, chapter VIII.

THE SALUTARY DESCENT

A. Syrkin

(*Sequel*)

4. It may be interesting to compare the Vishnuite evidence with traits of Buddha (already mentioned with respect to Viṣṇu's avatāras) as reflected in Buddhist tradition. We shall restrict ourselves here to the early canonical evidence of theravāda. In the Buddhist dogma (including the Hindu pantheon in the sphere of Buddha's law–cf. note 44), the god's activities prove to be "lower" than the Buddha's preaching. Indeed, the divine beings, by descending to earth, merely change their appearance. Moreover, they have not yet transcended the cycle of rebirth and require salvation themselves, hence their striving for Buddha's admonition. On the other hand, the latter has already freed himself from the bonds of existence; he is neither god, demi-god nor man (AN. IV, 36.2). His apparition among people, in order to preach the Truth, presupposed a greater descend—to an abyss between existence itself and non-existence.[55] At the same time, Buddha's state of perfect illumination (sammā-sambodhi) assumes his function of proclaiming to others the Truth which he, himself, has discovered and realized. As we know, there was another, inferior, kind of Buddha—the "individual" pacceka-buddha, enlightened as well but unable to preach the Truth (cf. Puggala-paññatti, I, 29). The sammā-sambuddha's ability to teach is displayed in his last earthly existence, while in previous births he is regarded as bodhisattva.[56] The Buddha's biographies speak of his decision to stay with people and to instruct them, though he himself is freed and can leave this world (cf. MN I, 26 etc.).[57] He remains with men till the end of his life; his subsequent leaving the world is, on account of this state, indeed his last. The liberation already achieved by him prevents further manifestations (heavenly or earthly) and his "descent" thus appears to be unique. Nevertheless, the natural need to perpetuate the possibility of salvation led to the doctrine of various Buddhas

periodically coming into the world. Once can see here a particular
replica of god's multiple salutary apparitions. In the Hindu tradi-
tion, the salutary function is with a certain variation (cf. above,
note 50) represented by the same godhead. In Buddhism, however,
precisely the same type of salvation is personified in different
teachers. The earlier canonical evidence speaks of seven Buddhas
(in a possible connection with the number symbolism, cf. e.g. the
Vedic tradition of seven ṛṣi). They are: Vipassi, Sikhi, Vessabhu,
Kakusandha, Konāgamana, Kassapa and Gotama (cf. DN XIV,
1.4 sq.). Their biographies, with certain modifications, follow the
same pattern, cf. the description of the first, Vipassi's life (ibid., 16
sq.) which coincides in a number of important details with that of
the last historical Buddha—Siddhartha Gotama. So, e.g., the
separate events are formulated in the text as being typical of Bud-
dha in a foregoing cliché: dhammatā esā ("it is the rule, that....").
Separate variations are connected here (analogously to the
mythology of avatāras) with certain principles of Indian traditional
cosmology, and its ideas of physical and moral degradation, etc.[58]
Thus, the first three Buddhas lived in previous world periods, the
last four in the present. Their span of life shortens, repectively,
from 80,000 years of Vispassi to a hundred years of Siddhartha
Gotama (cf. DN XIV, 1.4 sq.). Cf. also on pubbā buddhā
("previous Buddhas") Saṃyutta nikāya, VI. 1.2.12; XXXV, 83
etc. Another version speaks of 25 Buddhas, whose biographies are
given in Buddhavaṃsa. They live in the twelve previous world
periods and end with Gotama (the last seven of them being those
mentioned above). Again we find here certain analogies with
Jainas, whose list of 24 "saviours" also closes with a historical per-
sonage, Vardhamāna Mahāvīra, a contemporary of Gotama.

As with Vishnuite eschatology, Buddhism provides the world not
only with past and present Buddhas but also with a future one. His
name is Metteya (Skr. Maitreya—"friendly", "benevolent"). The
time of his appearance varies in different sources; thus, e.g.,
Cakkavatti-sīhanāda sutta (DN XXVI, 25) foretells his coming at
the end of mandkind's propitious regeneration.[59] At the present
time, according to the doctrine (cf. note 56), he is worshipped as
bodhisattva who lives in the heavenly world (the corresponding cult
is more popular in Mahāyāna tradition).

The most important function of the "perfectly illuminated" Buddha is preaching. His stereotype descriptions refer to him as an incomparable tutor (sārathi) of men, teacher (satthā) of god and men, etc. His teachings, manifoldly reflected in canonic scripture, provide extensive evidence for analyzing the methods of Buddha's didactics. One should stress here the apparent pragmatic character of Buddha's approach to his listeners. It has already been noted that Buddha resorted to different means of instruction, combining "flexibility and order, authority and freedom", etc.[60] One can speak here of a certain ambiguity reminding us of somewhat similar traits, mentioned above with respect to Upanishadic preceptors. So, e.g., arguing with Ambaṭṭha (Ambaṭṭha sutta–DN III, 1.19 sq.) Buddha—like Yājñavalkya, Uddālaka and other Hindu sages—says: "if you do not give a clear reply, or go off upon another issue, or remain silent, or go away, then your head will split in pieces on the spot" (sattadhā muddha phalissati). Thereafter a godly spirit (yakkha) appears in the sky ready to split the youth's head with his thunderbolt, and Ambaṭṭha "terrified, startled and agitated" changes his mind.[61] In Kūṭadanta sutta (DN V, 21) the brāhmaṇa Kūṭadanta approves Buddha's words "for he who approves not as well-said that which has been well spoken by the Samaṇa Gotama, verily his head would split in twain."[62] In another, Pāṭika sutta Buddha tells about his similar threats to Pāṭikaputta (DN XXIV, 1. 16 sq.), whereupon he adds some humiliating details of the latter's behaviour, repeating them in a mocking manner (ibid., 1.21 sq.; 2.2 sq.; 2.8 sq.).[63] The character of these scenes permits one to speak of Buddha's descent to the level of man's weak nature.[64]

These traits, as in previous Hindu evidence, appear against the background of rules defining the humble status of the Buddhist devotee, a bhikkhu, whose behaviour similarly combines the social descent and spiritual ascent. Here we find (particularly in Pārājika and Saṃghādisesa of Pātimokkha in Cullavagga V, X, etc.) numerous prescriptions concerning obedience, the periodical confessing of one's own sins, begging, etc.[65] In Brahmajāla sutta (DN I, 1.8-27; cf. II, 43-62; etc.) Buddha enumerates different rules connected with food, sleep, entertainments, talks, earning one's living, etc.[66] All these restrictions, according to Buddha's words, must

distinguish his order from other, non-buddhist recluses (samaṇa) and brāhmaṇas. With respect to this discipline, a characteristic device regarding the body's denigration can be mentioned: ''A brother reflects upon this very body, from the soles of his feet below upward to the crown of his head, as something enclosed in skin and full of diverse impurities....'' (DN XX, 5; etc.).[67] Corresponding rules and admonitions are intended, however, to bridle one's passions and usually do no exceed the limits of reasonable reserve. Following his ''middle-way'' principle, Buddha used to blame not only the indulgence in vice of some recluses and brāhmaṇas, but also their extreme ascetic austerities, which manifested themselves in self-torture, neglect of dress, starvation, dirtiness, loss of human appearance, etc. This censure, to a certain degree, conforms to Buddha's criticsm of orthodox Vedic tradition and is close to some traits of the Upanishadic approach (cf. MtU VII, 9). Such is the evidence of the earlier DN suttas on the naked ascetic who licks his hands after eating instead of washing them, wear rags picked up from a dust heap, plucks his hair and beard, feed on filth (like cowdung, etc.), and so on. All these austerities, according to Buddha, are of no use ''if the state of blissful attainment in conduct, in heart, in intellect, have not been practised by him, realized by him...'' (DN VIII, 14 sq.).[68] In DN XXV, 8, arguing with a wandering ascetic (paribbājaka) Nigrodha, Buddha says that these kinds of austerity are a blemish in ascetics and sets off the genuine Buddhist austerity against the former ones (cf. critique of certain practices in DN VI, 6 sq.).[69] One of the most vivid images is the naked ascetic, Korakkhattiya, who ''was wont to behave like a dog, walking on all fours, or sprawling on the ground and taking up food, whether hard or soft, with his mouth only (without using his hands)''. According to Buddha's prediction, he is reborn, like other naked ascetics, in the fearsome shape ''of the Kālakañjas, the very lowest of the Asura groups'' (DN XXIV, 1.7 sq.).[70] The text evidently refers to a certain sect of ascetics who behaved like dogs (kukkuravatika). We read about such an ascetic (together with another, behaving like a bull) in Kukkuravatika sutta (MN 57) where Buddha says that they must be reborn either in purgatory or in the form of an animal.[71]

This evidence characterizes a "middle" degree of "descent", practised by a Buddhist devotee proceeding along the eightfold Noble path. At the same time it presents valuable material on specific types of austerity, sometimes going beyond the limits of normal behaviour and widespread in some Hindu sects. In this respect there is noteworthy evidence of certain austerities practised by Hindu aspirants—one more kind of "descent" reminding us of some of Buddha's opponents.

5. We are concerned with Shivaite ascetics called pāśupatas (from Śiva's epithet Pāśupati—"Lord of cattle"). The Shivaite practices were especially noted for certain excesses—going about naked, eating impurities, cruel self-tortures in the sects of kāpalikas, kālamukhas, aghorapathins, etc.[72] The example of pāśupatas is interesting here, regarding some peculiar traits of behaviour cited in valuable evidence of Pāśupata sūtras (perhaps by Lakulīśa, ca. 100 A.D.) and in the commentary by Kauṇḍinya (ca. IV c. A.D.).[73] The five periods of pāśupata's life can be partially correlated to brāhmaṇa's traditional stages of life (āśramas). The first period already contains some eccentric details—in this period he is attached to the temple (PS I, 61). His worship of Śiva includes, beside prayers, acts of magical imitation: he lows like a bull, laughs, etc. (I, 80). In the second period he leaves the temple and purposely commits various ridiculous and improper actions. The next stages of his life remind one of more regular asceticism (living in a cave, in a cemetery, etc.). In this sequence the most peculiar is the second period, marked by his attempts to humiliate himself. Here he removes his secretarian marks (PS III, 1) in order not to be recognized by people, does everything possible to be despised (avamata) by them and wanders about like an outcast (III, 11-preta). He simulates abnormal states, plays the lecher, acts improperly, speaks nonsense, etc.; and all this "so that he may come to be ill-treated" (III, 18). These masochistic eccentricities have, however, a serious purpose. They are based on the belief that the unfounded contempt of others, i.e. contempt and slander provoked by his apparent, degraded state, will transfer his own bad karma (pāpa) to these people and give him their good karma, thus liberating him from evil (III, 6-9)[74] for "a wise man, being ill-

treated, accomplishes thereby all ascetism'' (III, 19).[75] We see that this deliberate humiliation again directly serves as a step to ascent, to perfect liberation. The inspirations, however, according to some elements of Shivaite doctrine, are not quite equal to traditional Hinduist mokṣa. This liberation presupposes mastering the supernatural power by likening the believer to Śiva-Rdura (cf. the magic character of certain actions, performed by him during the first period of his life—PS I,8; see above). At the same time a peculiar method practised by pāśupata, marks his ''descent'' not only from the social, but also from the moral point of view. Unlike brahmacārin the pāśupata—at least in this period of his life—aims not so much at improving his own qualities as at appropriating the merits of others. The results of his purely egoistic aims appear in some respects to be quite contrary to certain altruistic descents mentioned above. Indeed, hiding his real state (e.g., removing the sectarian mark he bears in the first period—cf. PS III, 1), he purposely leads his neighbours astray in order to rob them of their merits. His subsequent rise thus takes place at the expense of those deceived by him.

Some details of pāśupata's behaviour call forth analogies with a wellknown phenomenon of Greek antiquity—the of life led by cynics. In ancient sources (''De clarorum philosophorum vitis'' of Diogenes Laertius, Orations of Dio Chrysostomus, etc.) we find evidence of certain excesses by Diogenes and his followers: Monimos, Krates, Hipparchia, etc. Thus, e.g., Diogenes likewise practised unusual austerities, insulted others, relieved nature in public, imitated dogs, justified stealing, etc. (cf. Diog. Laert. VI, 22 sq.; 32 sq.; 69 sq.); Monimos imitated madness (ibid., 82); Krates provoked people's mockery (90 sq.); his wife, Hipparchia, dressed like a man (97); etc. (cf. also Dio Chrys. VIII.16). Some parellels are evident enough, e.g. imitating dogs that gave the name for corresponding schools in both cultures: Skr. kukkura (see above)—resp. Greek κύων, κυνικός. On the other hand, their aspirations have less in common. The cynic's way of life similarly aimed at his own perfection (though substantionally modified in comparison with Hindu ideals); independence from physical discomfort; contempt for delights; following paths of virtue, the shortest in their opinion being that of cynism; etc. (cf. Diog. Laer. VI, 70

sq.; 104; Dio Chrys. VIII, 20; IX, 12; etc.). Thus the dishonour
(ἀδοξία) sought by them had, to a certain degree, the same function
as that of pāśupata's avamāna.[76] The cynic's behaviour is particu-
larly interesting when regarded within the framework of a religious
cult (however conditional a demarcation may seem). As we know,
they esteemed Heracles as their patron and teacher, whom they
tried to imitate (cf. a device of imitation in pāśupata worship) by
despising pleasure, valuing freedom, etc. (cf. Diog. Laert. VI. 71;
Lucianus, Convivium, seu Lapithae 16; etc.).[77] The image of
Heracles himself is noteworthy enough, considering a number of
essential details of his life—his birth from a god who descended to
earth; his numerous misfortunes and humiliations suffered during
his wanderings; his salutary exploits in fighting monsters and
oppressors; his painful death and his regaining immortality in
heaven.[78] These provide suggestive parallels to soteriological
evidence partly mentioned above.

At the same time, notwithstanding the mutual search for
disrespect characteristic of both trends, the cynics' achievement of
perfection differs from that of pāśupatas in certain essential
respects. Cynics associated their personal progress with the aim of
improving other people. They compared the beneficial influence in
their way of life with the benefit brought to the human body by
medicine: ''Just as the good physician should go and offer his ser-
vices where the sick are most numerous, so, said he (Diogenes), the
man of wisdom should take up his abode where fools are thickest
in order to convict them of their folly and reprove them'' (Dio
Chrys. VIII, 5; cf. X).[79] An altruistic approach is here opposed to
the pāśupatas' egoism which causes harm to their neighbours. A
noteworthy parallel to cynics' self-denigration, more directly cor-
related with the sphere of religious behaviour, is found in later
Christian tradition.[80] Thus we shall once again go beyond the
domain of Indian evidence.

6. This parallel has another justification: a common typological
trait serving an important factor in the traditions compared—a
likening to the object of cult.[81] It appears, on the one hand, in
various symbolic forms (like communion). On the other, it appears
in concrete imitation of certain deeds and states of the deity, deter-

mining to a great extent the character of religious behaviour—not
only in its ritualistic part but also in other less formalized spheres.
A corresponding principle, relevant to some examples discussed
above (imitating Śiva, Heracles), can motivate, in particular,
imitation of the god's descent so typical of Christianity.

Certain aspects of Christ's descent, though connected directly
with our theme, need special attention.[82] Regarding this problem
we shall concentrate on a particular kind of imitation of Christ—
that of the passion and humiliation suffered by him.[83] The image
of a recluse or wanderer, who lives in poverty and humiliation,
rejects social position (secular or ecclesiastical), hides his holiness
under the guise of folly and is recognized only after death, is often
found in hagiography—sometimes in obvious connection with
typical folkore motifs (cf. above, note 13). The believer thus seems
to participate in Christ's suffering, the self-humiliation practised by
him becoming a device for salvation. It is natural that such an
imitation often follows the main trait of the model: suffering for the
salvation of one's neighbour.

We shall refer in this connection to a type of religious man
esteemed as a saint and called σάλος ("fool") in Byzantine tradition
(or more precisely, διὰ Χριστοῦ σάλος—"Fool for Christ's sake"; cf.
Russ. "jurodivyj"). Though this designation already refers to the
Saviour's image,[84] the "fool's" behaviour in some respects far
exceeds Christ's example. Preserving its beneficent influence, it is
characterized by certain eccentric actions which violate the estab-
lished etiquette. A number of these "fools" were canonized in
Byzantium and Russia.[85] The "fool's" way of life was not provided
by the monks' statutes and belonged to the so-called optional
"opera supererogatoria". We shall cite here the example of one of
the earliest "fools", Symeon of Emesa (VI c.), whose life was writ-
ten ca. the middle of the VIIth century.[86]

Speaking of his hero's youth, the author refers to a peculiar form
of asceticism previously practised by Symeon: a life of βόσκος
(133.3, "a grazing animal") who lived almost naked under the
open sky feeding on wild herbs and roots.[87] Young Symeon lives in
a monastery with his friend, but decides to leave the desert and
return to the world to save his neighbours (quoting I Cor. 10.24).
He goes first to Jerusalem and then to Emesa, where his eccentric

exploits begin. He enters the town dragging the carcass of a dog, disturbs the peace in the Church on the next Sunday, etc. Now and then he transgresses rules of decency—relieves himself in public, walks about naked, jumps, slaps others and receives blows himself. At the same time he performs miracles: drives the devil out, foretells death, and so on. This way of life appears to be opposed to that of βόσχος (which itself presents a kind of deliberate humility, along with elements of characteristic animal-imitation). The opposition βόσχος-σάλος thus marks the two parts of Symeon's life (as well as the structure of the corresponding text). Living as a "fool", Symeon systematically violates certain prohibitions followed by devotees (and particularly by βόσχος), while in rather a contradictory manner he simultaneously observes them. These violations refer to different spheres of behaviour, especially those directly connected with religious prescriptions. For example, preserving the utmost piety (cf. 122, 15 sq.; 154,12 sq.; etc.) he roisters in church (145, 25 sq.); observing the fast (148, 20 sq.; etc.) he violates it (148, 10; 156, 25 sq.);[88] remaining chaste he disrobes before women, dances with harlots (147, 25 sq.; 154, 28 sq.; etc.); though in sound mind, he commits senseless actions (cf. 150, 20 sq.). It is characteristic that all these eccentricities are often accompanied by self-denigration, provoking blows, etc. (147, 5 sq.; 15 sq.; etc.) or by humour and jokes (157, 17. sq.). His nightly prayers and lamentations are followed by morning gaiety (166, 7 sq.).

Symeon appears as an embodiment of divine folly which surpasses the wisdom of man (I Cor. 3.18; 4. 10; etc.). It must be stressed, however, that his folly is quite conscious and deliberate (145, 25; 152, 4; etc.). He tries to conceal his wisdom and virtue, revealing them only to deacon John (cf. 157, 16; 160, 19 sq.; 166, 18 sq.).

Among other saintly "fools" in Byzantium one is reminded of Andrew (ca. 880-946),[89] similarly famous for his exploits, though perhaps less striking. Andrew deliberately performed them, "playing (παίζων) like this wonderful Symeon of old" (648A). This tradition is perhaps still more popular in the Russian Orthodox Church. We find here a number of "jurodiryj" whose standard hagiographic images were evidently influenced by Byzantine prototypes. The peak of this tradition occurred in the XVIth

century—the age Vasilij Blažennyj, Nikola Pskovskij a.o. Their exploits are often analogous to those of Symeon: they suffer blows and are sometimes aggressive themselves, violate public decency, play the lecher, etc.[90] This evidence, like similar trends in Western Christianity,[91] was compared with scenic performances of mimes, buffoons, etc.[92] Symeon's behaviour indeed looks sometimes like that of an actor—cf. his simulating in public and behaving "normally" otherwise (155,19 sq.; 166, 5 sq.; etc.).[93] Here we find certain elements of comic effect as well. His eccentricities and inconsistencies naturally arouse a similar reaction in the public (which corresponds to Symeon's aim: to provoke derision and to laugh at the world himself—142, 26).

The "fool's" tradition, regarded within the framework of religious behaviour, helps, in our opinion, to establish certain regularities pertaining to our problem. It has been said that Symeon's first period of life can be correlated to a non-acceptance of the world (the state of a βόσκος as a form of monastic life). The second part can be correlated to an acceptance, which is, however, on a higher level. The "fool" behaves "incorrectly" from the profane point of view and sometimes even "not correctly" from the monk's. However, he still remains in his lofty state, where these generally accepted opposites are no longer pertinent. One may say that on this higher level he neutralizes the "incorrect"—"correct" opposition.[94] He is found thus—in terms used in note 94—between the II and the III levels. Indeed, we see how Symeon, surmounting the "incorrect"—"correct" dichotomy, overcomes such oppositions (pertinent to monks) as, e.g., "wisdom"—"folly" ("insanity"), "purity"—"dirtiness", "honour"—"dishonour", etc. This ability naturally draws him to the state of highest perfection and, though his exploits were regarded as "opera supererogatoria" (cf. above), he is occasionally imbued with a degree of holiness that many saints fall short of. In this respect one can draw strong parallels between Symeon and Christ.[95] The "fool" leaves the desert and returns to the world to save mortals; he casts out the devil, miraculously provides food for people, etc. (cf. 123, 22 sq.; 150, 7 sq.; 162, 22 sq.; 163, 16 sq.). The final parallel is the disappearance of his body, taken to heaven after the burial (168, 26 sq.). The image of Symeon appears in a definite

dynamics of elevation—from βόσκος to σάλος and to the highest
sanctity with ascension to heaven, similar to that of Christ. This
rise, however, suggests a transition from a non-acceptance state,
marked by a set of prohibitions, to a state where these prohibitions
are violated.[96] We have seen that his behaviour is condemned not
only by laymen but by monks as well. Thus, the ''fool's'' spiritual
rise becomes inseparable from a social, even moral, and intellectual
degradation—a kind of trial that somehow differs from the model
of Christ's passions and involves humiliations that befall the buf-
foon, lecher, etc. Like pāśupata or cynic, he deliberately provokes
contempt, abuse, and beating and so descends to the bottom of the
social hierarchy. However, contrary to pāśupata (and to a certain
degree similar to the cynic) he has an altruistic aim: ''first of all to
save souls by the harm that he has inflicted constantly in derision,
by the miracles he has performed in a foolish manner, or by the
admonition he has given them behaving like σάλος'' (157, 13 sq.).
He returns to men in order to save not only himself but also others,
by laughing at the world (142, 15; 26). As we see, besides this
equivocal but salutary device, he now and then performs direct
benefactions—saves from poison, cures demoniacs and so on (147,
15 sq.; 149, 27 sq.; 162, 12 sq.; etc.). Surpassing all wisdom and
reason by his godly folly (169, 1 sq.) Symeon at his higher level is
no longer defiled by prohibited ''incorrect'' things which his friend,
βόσκος John, is still afraid of (122, 15 sq.; 149, 17 sq.; 154, 27 sq.;
etc.—142, 28; 143, 16 sq.). The ''fool'' thus combines certain
opposing qualities, providing an instance of coincidentia
oppositorum.[97] In this case, the saint realizes both parts of different
oppositions (cf. 169, 11 sq.) paying tribute to each. At the same
time certain oppositions emerging from the ''subject''—''object''
discrimination, remain unsurpassed by Symeon. In an escapist
manner, he still remains sensitive to some prohibitions (e.g. inter-
course with women,[98] praise of people, etc.); partially neutralizing
separate ''incorrect''—''correct'' (resp. ''acceptance''—''non-
acceptance'') opposites. Thus he realizes, as we have already said,
a kind of borderline ''II-III levels'' situation. This peculiarity
seems to be connected with more general traits of the religion's
typology. We should remember, in particular, that Christian
canonical tradition does not contain as explicit evidence of the

"subject-and-object", "Self-and-not-Self", "God-and-indivi-
dual" coincidence as the Hindu Scripture does.[99] At the same time,
the Christian ideal of highest bliss and perfection evidently
preserves the notion of individuality (cf. below). In this respect the
"fool", notwithstanding his oddity, is still closer to a traditional
Orthodox Christian than to a Hindu saint. His "weak" human
points are displayed in the course of his (apparently abnormal and
eccentric) premeditated salutary approach to men from a "non-
acceptance" state. These points clarify some aspects of his func-
tional affinity to a divine creature who deliberately lowers his level
for the sake of saving people.

7. Examples drawn above refer to different, mostly independent,
traditions. This evident independence allows us to expose certain
traits typical of the "salutary descent" phenomenon and pertinent
to important aspects of religious study.

We have seen that rise and descent appear as the main character-
istics of ethical space, in which the corresponding transference is
closely connected with the moral evaluation of conduct. The
"ethical" and "spatial" aspects often cannot be strictly demar-
cated. Their fusion appears, on the one hand, in most archaic
cosmogonic beliefs and in folklore tradition[100] outside the sphere of
religious dogmatics, on the other. Apart from certain "egoistic",
"downfall" descent (cf. above), "altruistic" descent in its direct
(spatial) and methaphoric (social, physical, etc.) sense appears as
one of the most important devices of salvation (from a certain
calamity, oppression, etc., or from this worldly existence in
general). The ethical connotation is already presupposed here by
virtue of the purpose itself. This descent can also be traced, with
definite modifications, in traditions that emphasize the necessity of
the individual striving for salvation (as, e.g., in earlier Buddhism).

The descent motivates the subsequent rise, while the character of
both substantially varies regarding the active and passive sides of
the process: the saving and the saved, as we have seen, being
capable of rising and falling in the drama of salvation. The
saviour's descent is performed first of all by the divinity.[101] Here
the situation of the earthly creature, helped by a heavenly one,
presupposes the spatial descent, reflected in corresponding expres-

sion with respect to Viṣṇu (avatāra), Christ, etc. We have seen that Buddhist dogmatics permit us also to speak of Buddha as of bodhisattva's last descent from heavenly to earthly existence. Upon the fulfillment of his task, the god's descent is necessarily followed by his ascent—his return to a genuine higher state, temporarily left by him. In principle such an act can be repeated by the same god. However, in accordance with the preached character of salvation, exactly the same function can be fulfilled by different persons—Buddhas, tīrthankaras (though one can also speak of salutary exploits performed by Gotama Buddha in his previous births—see the Jātakas). It can be placed not only in the past but in the future as well, constituting in this latter case different types of messianism (Kalki, Maitreya, tīrthankaras of the next world-period, etc.).

The salvation can also be performed by a mortal creature, endowed with qualities of perfection—wisdom, piety, heroism. This person is sometimes close to divine incarnation and afterwards goes to heaven. The teacher can reach complete liberation after his death or even during his life-time (jīvanmukta), cf. for example, the Upanishadic sages preaching the tradition begun by Brahman (like Yājñavalkya, Uddālaka, a.o.—BU VI, 5. 2), or Christian saints imitating the divine Saviour and taken to heaven. Notwithstanding the subsequent, often literal, ascent, here the descent is naturally modified. Remaining a purposeful act, it becomes metaphorical, relating to certain social aspects of life in the manifold practices of Hindus, Jains, etc. It often involves physiological—and in some cases moral and intellectual—degradation as a deliberate device resorting to definite states simulated for the sake of didactics (cynics, "fools"). Sometimes it is difficult to distinguish between the teachers saving others and those saving themselves. So, the "fool's" behaviour stresses the first function. In some ascetic trends, in cynicism, a corresponding mode of living is evidently intended to serve both aims; while in the case of pāśupatas one can speak of individual salvation only (cf. below). With respect to mortals such descent is naturally confined to the limits of the present worldly life of the teacher and in this sense remains single, without any past or future projections related to the same person.

The next category of descent refers to those actively saving themselves (but not others) or saved by somebody. They are

usually mortals—at best on the way to liberation and immortality. In this case spatial descent is also possible, through, with respect to their location, in the underworld, hell, land of spirits, etc.—a motif widespread in folklore and epics.[102] Its function often corresponds here to that of pilgrimage (''horizontal'' transference), service with hard tasks and trials, initiation, etc. We find it, for example, in the story of Naciketas in KtU. However, in most of these cases we come across the allegorical—social or physical—descent. Cf. the practices (sometimes rather severe) of Shivaite, Jaina and other ascetics aimed at self-perfection, or the tradition of Christian humility imitating the Saviour's example in accordance with Mt 5. 3 sq. and other canonical precepts (cf. note 13). This self-denigration can display itself in excessive, sometimes pathological forms. Such are the pāśupatas, whose eccentricities, though not unique, suggest, contrary to the rest, a peculiar kind of individual salvation at the expense of others. It is not always easy to differentiate between these relatively active aspirants, and those remaining more passive. Among the latter the most typical person is the pupil (brahmacārin). He is characterized in Hindu tradition by certain features distinguishing him from other āśrama states, also pertinent to the process of salvation—from the gṛhastha (the brāhmaṇa householder appearing in the function of the teacher, like, e.g., Satyakāma Jābāla in ChU IV, 6 sq.) and from the recluse or ascetic (vānaprastha, saṃnyāsin as a rule following his individual path to salvation, but appearing also as preceptor).[103] In this state, apart from possible special tasks and trials, the regular social subordination takes place. The pupil lives for a definite period in his teacher's house, performing various duties (one can also find analogous evidence of a pupil's dependence and humiliation in other traditions). It must be stressed, however, that his humility is directly correlated to moral and spiritual elevation. Since the aspirant's liberation leads, according to Hindu dogmatics, to cessation of births (conceived also in the notions of spatial ascent), his way appears to be final. However, it may be repeated, in case of insufficient endeavour is pursuing the Truth, when after the partial ascent the deceased descends into the mother's womb and the cycle of rebirth continues (cf. note 6). One can observe that the ascetic's and student's life can also be led by divine creatures, the corre-

sponding principles of behaviour remaining essentially the same. Nevertheless the aims of these aspirants and their achievements undergo considerable changes in the Hindu tradition. The divine or semi-divine ascetics aim, as a rule, at mastering an additional magic capacity and power.[104] The character of their subsequent elevation also varies—in the way in which gods and asuras use their power. Among gods, the image of Śiva is most typical in this respect; famous for his great austerities, he is venerated as the lord of yoga (Yogéśvara), patron of ascetics.[105] On the other hand, asuras (Hiraṇyakásipu, Bali, etc.) abuse their power, which leads them to moral degradation and causes suffering to other creatures (hence the need for some of Viṣṇu's avatāras). The same difference displays itself in the process of study, for the salutary function of the Truth is similarly subject to this division of roles. The primordial enemies of gods, asuras, notwithstanding their effort, are unable to grasp the Truth. Endowed with perverted minds, "desirous of a self different (from a true one)"—cf. MtU VII, 10;[106] they receive false knowledge, which leads them to destruction. However, as we have noted, this outcome occurs thanks to the premeditated stratagem of their godly preceptors.

Here we should like to recapitulate some peculiar features of the teacher's image, adding one more metaphorical shade to their descent. We refer to their evident aggressiveness—sometimes even cruelty—displaying itself in threats, anger, curses, etc. These latter obviously contradict the benefactory, salutary function (now and then explicitly expressed in benevolent words and deeds) and dispense corresponding images with a certain ambiguity. As we have seen, it refers not only to mortals (like Yājñavalkya, Satyakāma, a.o.) but, what might appear more strange at first sight, to divine teachers, embodiments of highest perfection: Viṣṇu (Kṛṣṇa), Buddha, Christ.

One may suggest that these inconsistencies could be treated as an example of coincidentia oppositorum.[107] This phenomenon, however, cannot serve as a sufficient reason for the cases described above which relate to gods and mortals as well. Here we come across another aspect of the problems directly connected with the process of descent (resp. "humanization"). The divine (or at any rate enlightened and perfected) creature, endowed with the highest

knowledge, returns to the world to bring salvation to ordinary peo-
ple. This aim obviously prevents him from neutralizing certain
values, which remain pertinent to his function. Descending to a
layman's level which is even lower than the monk's "correct"
state, overcome by him, he has to associate with people whose
behaviour is characterized by "lower" categories. He should there-
fore resort to corresponding pragmatic devices, possibly including
curses, threats, etc.; which, though sometimes contradicting his
own principles (like Buddha's miracles—DN, XI, 3 sq.; XXIV, 4
sq.; cf. note 61), seem to him necessary for success. The same refers
to the "fool's" eccentric devices marked by psychological and
therapeutic motivation. In such a transition a perfected "Saviour"
seems to be relatively degraded, and it is his "humanization",
rather than the phenomenon of coincidentia oppositorum, that
explains certain contradictions and inconsistencies displayed by
him. As we see, this kind of descent sometimes appears in a cor-
respondence to the believer's social humility and spiritual ascent.
We refer to the image of the self-denying, suffering pupil in his rela-
tion to an illuminated though rude and merciless teacher:
Janaśruti—to Raikva, Upakosala—to Satyakāma, etc. However,
the saviour's "humanization" is temporary, it is limited by the
sphere of corresponding "lower" contact. The teacher does not
change his perfection (already present or achieved upon the end of
his earthly existence).

One should reconsider certain important doctrinal peculiarities
mentioned here briefly regarding this transition. As we have noted,
the Christian canonical dogmatics do not preach the state of com-
plete "subject"—"object" or "Self"—"not-Self" neutralization;
thus the saviour's descent with respective tribute to men's infir-
mities may look less inconsistent. At the same time, corresponding
apparitions of Viṣṇu or Buddha, esteemed in terms of the highest
"Self"—"not-Self" equation (cf. notes 94, 99), appear more as a
descent to a lower level of behaviour[108]—a discrepancy somehow
modified by a traditional concept of the illusory character which
these apparitions possess.[109] In this connection, a more consecutive
way is represented by Jaina saint, tīrthaṅkara. According to
dogmatics, he is above the desire of saving others (a particular
instance of surmounting all desires) and appears rather as model

and inspirer than helper and teacher.[110] In accordance with this, the Hindu aspirant, ascending to perfection, surmounts the world's temptations more consecutively and radically (cf. note 98 on Śikhidhvaja as compared to Symeon or other traditional image of a Christian saint).

These specific differences in the characteristics of the highest state are pertinent to another important aspect to our dichotomy, which deserves special attention. On the one hand every descent (divine or mortal) is marked by an individualized state where the person preserves (or subsequently resumes) his identity. On the other hand, in the Hindu-type traditions the ascent appears as a process of depersonalization and dissolution of the individual Self in the highest reality. At the same time, is Christianity the Self is preserved, though transformed to some higher level.[111] Modifications of this kind directly touch upon the specific character of theophany in different traditions.[112]

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[55] Concerning Buddha's salutary function cf. also: Conze. *Op. cit.*, pp. 33 sq.; particularly, pp. 46-47—analogies with Christianity (a problem often discussed; see e.g., I.A. Sparks. "Buddha and Christ: a functional analysis"—*Numen*, v. 13, 1966, pp. 190-204; B. H. Streeter. *The Buddha and the Christ*. Port Washington, 1970; etc.). One can remark that Conze's use of the word "Saviour" in corresponding title ("Buddhist saviours") arouses a methodological problem of semantics. It was particularly noted that the character of the Buddhist "salvation" is wholly different from that of the Christian. Cf. A. Prince. "The concept of Buddhahood in early and later Buddhism"—*Journal of the Oriental Society of Australia*, v. 7, N. 1-2, 1970, p. 117. See in this connection: N. Smart. "Problems of the application of Western terminology to Theravada Buddhism, with special reference to the relationship between the Buddha and the gods."—*Religion. A Journal of Religion and Religions*, v. 2, pt. 1, 1972, pp. 37-41.

[56] According to traditional concepts (cf. AN IV. 127; VIII. 70; etc.) the last of these bodhisattva births (preceeding the Buddha's birth on the earth) takes place in one of the heavenly worlds. This permits us to speak of Buddha's last spatial descent to this world previous to his "descent" to people as preceptor. Cf. e.g., the usual expression of "descent into a mother's womb" (mātu = kucchiṃ okkami—DN, XIV. 1, 17 sq.; etc.). The Jaina tradition also speaks about the present heavenly abodes of those who will appear on the earth in the next world-period as completely liberated tīrthaṅkaras (cf. P. Thomas. *Epics, Myths and legends of India*, Bombay, pp. 200 sq.).

[57] Cf. also Mahāvagga I.5: the emancipated Buddha doubts whether other men will be able to understand him and he becomes "inclined to remain in quiet and not to preach the doctrine" but, touched by Brahman's entreaties, he changes his mind (cf. *Vinaya texts*, tr. from Pāli by T. W. Rhys Davids and H. Oldenberg. pt. I, Delhi, 1974, pp. 84 sq.).

[58] Corresponding ideas (cf. above, note 48) are reflected in a number of earlier canonical texts. Cf. particularly, notions of śaṃvaṭṭa = kappa—vivaṭṭa-kappa resp. periods of "rolling up", world dissolution and "rolling back", development, evolution of the world (the opposite meanings, however, are also possible: DN I. 1.32; 2.2: XXIV. 2. 15; XXVII; 10; AN VIII. 62.2 sq.; etc,. cf. *Pali—English dictionary* by T.W. Rhys Davids and W. Stede, London, 1972, pp. 637, 656)—i.e. of time-cycles with the alternating evolution and dissolution of the universe. The doctrine of world's degeneration (appearing as a kind of universal—cf., e.g., M. Eliade. "Dimensions religieuses du renouvellement cosmique"—*EJ*, 1959, Bd. XXVIII, S. 249 sq.) is illustrated in Cakkavatti-sīhanāda sutta (DN XXVI. 2-24) which presents a picture of consecutive degradation of a virtuous kingdom, accompanied by the growth of poverty, violence, fraud, etc. and a gradual diminution of the term of life (from 80,000 to ten years). People again turn to righteousness and gradually attain the initial blissful state. Another example is presented in Aggañña sutta (DN XXVII 11-25) where physical and moral degradation is connected with the deterioration of men's food (see also: *Mahāvastu*, ed. E. Senart, t. I, Paris, 1882, pp. 338-348). Cf. K. Seidenstücker. "Die Buddhistische Kosmosophie und ihre Problem"—*Buddhistischer Weltspiegel*, III. Jhrg., N. 1-3. 1921, S. 18 sq.; 109 sq.; H. Günther. "Die Buddhistische Kosmogonie"—*ZDMG*, Bd. 88, 1944, S. 44-83; U. Schneider. "Ein Beitrag zur Aggañña-Suttanta—*Indo-Iranian Journal*, v. I, N.4, 1957, pp. 253-285; B. G. Gokhale. "The Theravāda-buddhist view of history," *JAOS*, v. 85, N. 3, 1965, pp. 354-360; idem. "The early Buddhist view of the state"—*JAOS*, v. 89, N. 4, 1969, pp. 731-738; etc. The Jaina cosmology distinguishes between the present degenerating period (avasarpiṇī) and the next regenerating (utsarpiṇī) one, that likewise alternate in the cycle of time. The 24 tīrthaṅkaras, usually referred to, are those appearing in the present period, while the former and the later periods each have the same number of tīrthaṅkaras. Cf. H.v. Glasenapp. *Der Janismus*. Eine Indische Erlösungsreligion nach den Quellen dargestellt, Berlin, 1925, S. 244 sq. (cf. ibid., S. 474, Anm. 81 on divergences in Jaina sources concerning the future period); A. Guérinot. *La religion Djaïna*, Paris, 1926, pp. 99 sq.; W. Schubring. *The doctrine of the Jainas*, Delhi, 1962, pp. 225 sq.; Thomas. *Op. cit.*, pp. 195 sq.; etc.

[59] Cf. Abegg. *Op. cit.*, S. 145 sq.; G.P. Malalasekera. *Dictionary of Pali proper names*, v. II. London, 1974, pp. 660-662. Cf. with respect to this latter's descent: D.I. Lauf, *op. cit.*, EJ, 1981, S. 373-402.

[60] See W. Stoesz. "The Buddha as teacher"—*Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, v. 46, No. 2, 1978, pp. 139, 149 sq. With respect to the following exposition see more details in: A. Syrkin. "Notes on the Buddha's threats in Dīgha Nikāya"—*Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies*, vol. 7, no. 1, 1984, pp. 147-158.

[61] *Dialogues of the Buddha*, tr. by T. W. Rhys Davids, I, Oxford, 1923, pp. 116 sq. (cf. ibid., note 3—some parallels from Pāli sources). Concerning Buddha's "inconsistencies" one should also be reminded of his attitude to miracles (iddhi)—now denounced by him (cf. DN XI 3 sq.: "I perceive danger in the practice of mystic wonders that I loathe, and abhor and am ashamed thereof"—*Dialogues of the Buddha*, pt. I, p. 278) and now resorted to (cf. DN XXIV. 1.4 sq.).

[62] Ibid., pt. I, p. 181.

[63] Ibid., pt. III, 1921, pp. 19 sq.; 22 sq. Cf. P. V. Bapat. "The different strata in the literary material of the Dīgha Nikāya"—*Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute*, v. 8, pt. 1, 1926, p. 13; K. Seidenstücker. "Humor in den Reden Buddhas"—*Busshistischer Weltspiegel*, Jhrg. III, No 1, 1921, S. 37 sq.

[64] Cf. Ruben. Krishna, S. 258 on some tricks of Bodhisattva in Buddhist narrative literature.

[65] See S. Dutt. *Early Buddhist monachism*, Bombay, 1960; Mookerji, *Op. cit.*, pp. 414 sq.; I.B. Horner, *Women under primitive Buddhism*, Delhi, 1975, pp. 118 sq.; cf. also: A. Ellenjimittam. *Monasticism, Christian and Hindu-Buddhist*, Bombay, 1970.

[66] Cf. L. Feer. "Professions interdits par le Bouddhisme", *Actes du 8ᵉ Congrès International des Orientalistes*, Leiden, 1890, pp. 65-71.

[67] *Dialogues of the Buddha*. pt. II, p. 330. An analogous approach has parallels in Hindu tradition; cf. MtU I. 3: "in this foul-smelling, unsubstantional body... what is good of the enjoyment of desires" (Principal Upanisads, p. 796); III. 4; Man VI. 76 sq.; etc. Similar denigration is characteristic of Christian ascetics and especially "Fools for Christ's sake" (see below).

[68] *Dialogues of the Buddha*, pt. I, pp. 226 sq.

[69] Cf. *Dīghanikāya in Auswahl*, übers. v. R. Otto Franke, Göttingen und Leipzig, 1913, S. 305 sq.; U. Dhammaratana." Buddha and asceticism"—*Indian Historical Quarterly*, v. 33, N. 2, 1957. pp. 129-138; H.-F. Holck. "Typische Ausdrucksformeln der körperlichen Askese in Altindischer Literatur"—*Asiatische Studien*, XXIV, N. 1-2, 1970, S. 34-50. Cf. also concerning the psychopathological aspect of the problem: J. Moussaieff Masson." The psychology of the ascetic"—*Journal of Asian Studies*, v. 35, N. 4, 1976, pp. 611-625.

[70] *Dialogues of the Buddha*, pt. III, pp. 11 sq.

[71] It is possible that the well-known scene from ChU I.12, depicting recitation of a certain ritual text by dogs (śauva udgītha) refers to this kind of ascetic. Cf. A. Hillebrandt. "Weitere Bemerkungen zu den Upaniṣads"—*ZDMG*, Bd. 71, 1917, S. 313-314; Winternitz, *Op. cit.*, t. II, Calcutta, 1933, p. 50; A. Syrkin. "K tolkovaniju Chāndogya upaniṣad I. 12," in: *Jazyki Indii, Pakistana, Nepala i Cejlona*, Moskva, 1968, pp. 463 sq.

[72] Cf. H. v. Glasenapp. *Der Hinduismus*. München, 1922, S. 390 sq.; *A comprehensive history of India*, v. II. Bombay, 1957, pp. 393 sq. (J. N. Banerjea); D. Lorenzen. *The kāpālikas and kālamukhas—two lost Shivaite sects*. Berkeley, 1972; etc. Concerning the analysis of corresponding sources cf. Holck, *Op. cit.*; J. F. Sprockhoff. *Saṃnyāsa* I, Wiesbaden, 1976.

[73] *Pāśupata sūtras* with Panchārthabhāshya of Kauṇḍinya, ed. R. Ananthakrishna Sastri, Trivandrum, 1940; see: D. Ingalls. "Cynics and pāśupatas: the seeking of Dishonor"—*Harvard Theological Review*, v. 55, N. 3, 1962, pp. 281-298; Lorenzen, *Op. cit.*, pp. 173 sq.

[74] Belief in the possibility of corresponding transference (e.g., as a result of disrespecting brāhmaṇa, of appropriating the other's good, etc.) is testified in a number of Hindu sources—cf. Man III, 100; IV. 200 sq.; Pañcatantra, text of Pūrnabhadra, IV, 1; etc.

[75] Ingalls, *Op. cit.*, pp. 291 sq. Cf. *Ibid.* pp. 294 sq. on similar evidence outside this tradition, particularly on a number of "beast-vows": the bull-vow (govrata in Jaiminīya brāhmaṇa and other sources: cf. above on MN 57), the cock-vow, etc., with a reference to his review of D. D. Kosambi's *Introduction to the study of Indian history* (in *JAOS*, v. 77, 1957, p. 223)

⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 292.

⁷⁷ Cf. F. Sayre. *The Greek cynics*, Baltimore, 1948, p. 89, etc. D. Ingalls (*Op. cit.*, pp. 292 sq.) suggest some parallels between cynics' ἐλευθερός and pāśupatas' mukta, as meaning in both cases "not only freedom from suffering but freedom to unlimited power". He draws further parallels between the club as Heracles' weapon and symbol and the meaning of pāśupata teacher's name Lakulīśa ("Lord of the club"). However, his witty hypothesis (*ibid.*, p. 296, n. 30) that Lakulīśa (which served also as Śiva's epithet) is derived from Ἡρακλῆς as a result of loss of the first syllable and R/L alternation, "in order to help out a folk etymology", seems rather dubious. He himself justly doubts (ibid.) the possibility of a genetic relation and suggests the parallel influence of archaic shamanistic practices (particularly in the phenomenon of the magical beast-imitation—cf. above, note 75) on both traditions.

⁷⁸ See, e.g., ancient Greek evidence of corresponding cult of saviour and benefactor (partly independent from Cynical tradition): Euripides. *Heracles*, 1952 (εὐεργέτης βροτοῖσι): Plutarchus. *Lycurgus*, XXX. 2; Dio Chrys. *De imperio orat.* I. 84: "This.... was what made him Deliverer (σωτῆρα) of the earth and of the human race.... And even to this day.... you have in him a helper and protector" (*Dio Chrysostom*, with an Engl. transl. by J. W. Cohoon, v. I, London, 1949, pp. 44 sq.); Artemidorus, *Onirocriticon* II, 37; etc. Cf. L. Preller, *Griechische Mythologie*, Bd. II, Berlin, 1875, S. 272 sq.; H. v. Willamowitz-Moellendorf, *Euripides Heracles*, Berlin, 1909, S. 102 sq.; F. Pfister. "Heracles und Christus"—*Archiv für Religionswissenschaft*, Bd. 34, 1937, S. 42-60; M. Mühl. "Des Heracles Himmelfahrt"—*"Rheinisches Museum"*, N. F., Bd. 101, H. 2, 1958, S. 106-134 (particularly, S. 133—analogy with Christ); G.K. Galinski. *The Heracles themes*, Oxford, 1972, pp. 44, 126.; etc.

⁷⁹ Dio Chrysostom, v. I, pp. 378 sq.; *ibid.*, pp. 418 sq. Cf. also Pseudo-Diogenes. *Epistolae* 10. See Ingalls, *Op. cit.*, pp. 293 sq.

⁸⁰ Concerning some aspects of this influence cf., e.g., J. Leipoldt. *Griechische Philosophie und frühchristliche Askese*, Berlin, 1961, S. 39, 62 sq.; etc.

⁸¹ Cf., for example, on corresponding evidence in archaic mentality: L. Lévy-Bruhl. *La mythologie primitive*, Paris, 1935, pp. 160 sq.; idem. *Les fonctions mentales dans les sociétés inférieures*, Paris, 1951, pp. 68 sq.

⁸² Concerning this problem we shall briefly mention here one of the aspects connected with the following exposition: the "humanized" image of Christ as a substantial detail of his earthly apparition, with certain opposite qualities marking this image. See, e.g., the Gospels' evidence (with respect to some traits of Hindu and Buddhist preceptors mentioned above) on wrath, condemnation, curses, etc. combined with their opposite actions and states in Mt 10. 34 sq.; 11. 20 sq.; 12. 34 sq.; 13. 40 sq.; 23. 33 sq.; 25. 41 sq.; Mr 9. 19 sq.; Lc 9. 41; In 2. 15; etc. Cf. C. G. Jung. *Answer to Job*. Princeton, 1973, pp. 44 sq.; 74 sq. (particularly on the image of the "wrathful Lamb"); Syrkin. *K xarakteristike*, pp. 165 sq.; 182 sq.; etc.

⁸³ Cf. the treatise of the same name (Imitatio Christi) by Thomas à Kempis. One can be reminded of the constant use of such words as "humble", "humility", "submission", "infirmity", "self-denial", etc., sounding here like leit-motivs.

⁸⁴ Cf. the characteristic formula of corresponding service (troparion): "Your slave, o Christ... was a fool on the earth for Your sake". (*Pravoslavnyj molitvoslov*, Moskva, 1970, p. 162). Cf. in this connection: A. Smitmans. *Der Narr Jesus. Glauben wieder den Strich*. Stuttgart, 1974, S. 16, 45 sq.; etc.

[85] See I. Kovalevskij. *Jurodstvo o Xriste i Xrista radi jurodivye*. Moskva, 1900; S. Hilpisch. "Die Torheir um Christiwillen"—*Zeitschrift für Askese und Mystik*, 6 Jhrg., H. 2, 1931, S. 121-131; E. Benz. "Heilige Narrheit"—*Kyrios*, 3, 1938, S. 1-55; P. Hauptmann. "Die "Narren um Christi willen" in der Ostkirche"—*Kirche im Osten*, Bd. 2, 1959, S. 27-49; G. P. Fedotov. *Sviatye drevney Rusi* (X-XVII st.), New York, 1960, pp. 191 sq.; D. S. Lixačev, A. M. Pančenko, N. V. Ponyrko. *Smex v drevnej Rusi*, Leningrad, "Nauka", 1984, pp. 72 sq,. 79 sq.; Vs. Rochcau, "Saint Siméon Salos, ermite palestinien et prototype des "Fous-pour-le-Christ""'—*Proche-Orient chrétien*, t. 28, 1978, pp. 209-219; J. Saward. *Perfect fools: Folly for Christ's sake in Catholic and Orthodox spirituality*, Oxford, 1980; etc. See more detailed exposition in: A. Syrkin. "On the behaviour of "fool for Christ's sake""'—*History of Religions*, vol. 22, No. 2, November 1982, pp. 150-171.

[86] See: *Patrologiae cursus completus*, Series graeca, t. 93, Parisiis 1895, pp. 1669-1748; L. Rydén. *Das Leben des Heiligen Narren Symeon von Leontios von Neapolis*, Uppsala, 1963 (whose critical edition on pp. 121-170 we follow here); idem. *Bemerkungen zum Leben des Heiligen Narren Symeon von Leontios von Neapolis*, Uppsala, 1970.

[87] See parallel evidence of Sozomenus, *Kirchengeschichte*, hrsq. v. J. Bidez, Berlin, 1960. S. 289.11-15; "Ioannis Moschi Pratum spirituale," in: *Patrologiae*,.. t. 87, pt. 3. Parisiis, 1865, pp. 3028 sq.; etc. Cf. above, note 75.

[88] Concerning these excesses cf. L. Ryden. "Der Asket als Fresser"—*Eranos*, vol. 67, 1969, S. 48-53.

[89] *Patrologiae*, t. 111, Parisiis, 1863, pp. 627-888; cf. S. Murrat. *A study of the Life of Andreas, the Fool for the sake of Christ*. Diss. München, 1910; Hilpisch, *Op. cit.*, S. 127 sq.; etc.

[90] See above, note 85; cf. also: I.I. Kuznecov. "Svjatye Blažennye Vasilij i Ioann, Xrista radi moskovskie čudotvorcy"—*Zapiski moskovskogo arxeologičeskogo instituta*, T. VIII, 1910, pp. 45 sq.; 84 sq.; I.U. Budovnic, Jurodivye drevnej Rusi"—*Voprosy istorii religii i ateizma*, XII, Moskva, 1964, pp. 170-195; etc.

[91] Cf., e.g., the evidence on John of God (1495-1550), founder of the Hospitallers, who simulated insanity, received blows, etc. In the West, however, we do not find exactly the same tradition of the "fool", but, rather, separate details of corresponding behaviour. Cf. noteworthy traits of St. Francis of Assisi, who called himself and his pupils "joculatores domini". Though abstaining from certain obscene excesses he violates separate rules pertinent to laymen and clergy (cf. Celano. *Vita prima*, I, XV, XIX; *Fioretti* VIII, X; etc.). His disciple Juniper (Ginepro) rejoices in abuses, falsely accuses himself of indecency, etc. (*Life of Juniper*, I sq.; V, VIII sq.). Cf. K. Hefele. *Die Bettelorden und das religiöse Volksleben Ober- und Mittelitaliens in XIII. Jahrhundert*, Leipzig, 1910, S. 49.; G. Widengren, "Harlekin und, Mönchskutte, Clownhut und Derwischmütze"—*Orientalia Suecana*, v. II, 1953, S. 79; etc.

[92] Cf. H. Reich. *Der Mimus*. Hildesheim, New York, 1974, S. 822 sq.; J. Horovitz. *Spuren griechischer Mimen im Orient*, Berlin, 1905, S. 34 sq.; 50 sq.; Widengren. *Op. cit.* S. 77; Lixačev, Pančenko, Ponyrko, *Op. cit.*, pp. 81 sq.; etc.

[93] Cf. similar behaviour of Russian jurodivyj Fjodor (*Žitie protopopa Avvakuma*, Moskva, 1960, p. 99).

[94] With respect to Orthodox Christianity we can speak here of the sequence: layman (λαϊκός)—monk (μόναχος)—"fool for Christ's sake" (σάλος, jurodivyj) where the transition to a new level involved overcoming certain values, characteristic of the previous one. In the Eastern Orthodox tradition the first two levels were designated as "incorrect"—"correct" ("nepravil'nyj"—

"pravil'nyj") respectively (cf., e.g., Ju. Lotman, B. Uspenskij. "Novye aspekty izučenija kul'tury drevnej Rusi"—*Voprosy literatury*, N. 3, 1977, pp. 162-163)— i.e. the layman's "incorrect" acceptance of the world and the monk's "correct" non-acceptance. These types of behaviour can be correlated to a scheme proposed by us on the basis of ancient Indian evidence, but probably applicable to a certain degree to other traditions as well. This scheme includes three levels: the first, the "acceptance" of the world, whereby a number of pragmatic, ethic, etc. opposi- tions remain pertinent; it is connected, e.g., with the state of gṛhastha ("staying at home"—the head of a family, who performs all social duties). The second level of "non-acceptance" rejects certain pragmatic values pertinent to the first level, still preserving some ethical values and the relevance of the general opposition of "acceptance"—"non-acceptance". Such are the states of recluses and wandering ascetics who more or less consitently renounce the world. The third level is the state of highest bliss (cf. notions of brāhmaṇa, arahant, etc.) where all the opposites resulting from distinctions between the subject and the object (including the "acceptance"—"non-acceptance") are neutralized. Consequently, the iden- tity of the "subject"—"object", "Self"—"not Self", and other more specific opposites is proclaimed (cf. below, note 97). See A. Syrkin. "K sistematizacii nekotoryx ponjatij v sanskrite" in: *Semiotika i vostočnye jazyki*, Moskva, 1967, pp. 146 sq.; 159; idem. "O. sravnitel'noj verojatnosti nekotoryx tipologičeskix parallelej" in: "III letnjaja škola po vtoričnym modelirujuščim sistemam. Tezisy", Tartu, 1968, pp. 12 sq.

[95] Cf. Rydén. *Bemerkungen*, S. 25, 34-35, 78-79, 124-125, 130, 134 sq.; 138-140; etc.

[96] This state must be distinguished from another type of religious behaviour: that of especially prescribing the performance of definite prohibitions (e.g., in cer- tain tantric sects practising special modes of sexual relations, the eating of meat, etc.). Violations of separate taboos can scarcely be correlated here to a higher level of behaviour (in the sence accepted above) since in this performance they acquire a new, positive significance. Remaining thus within the limits of the "accept- ance"—"non-acceptance" level, they only suggest the reversed order of positive and negative values.

[97] Cf. a noteworthy analogy to perfection, that successively neutralizes corre- sponding values: "let a Brāhmaṇa after he has done with learning (pāṇḍityam), desire to live as a child (bālyena). When he has done (both) with the state of childhood and with the learning, then be becomes a silent meditator (muniḥ). Having done with (both) the non-meditative and the meditative states, then he becomes a Brāhmaṇa (a knower of Brahman)" (BU III. 5.1—cf. *Principal Upaniṣads*, p. 221). Another parallel to the "fool's" immunity from evil is found in the same text: "He does not become greater by good works, nor smaller by evil works" (BU IV. 4.22; see also KtU II. 2.11; ChU VIII. 4.1; etc.—cf. *Principal Upaniṣads*, p. 279; etc.). BU IV. 3.22 presents another typical example of coin- cidentia: "there (in that state) a father is not a father, a mother is not a mother, the worlds are not the worlds, the gods are not the gods, the Vedas are not the Vedas. There a thief is not a thief, a murderer is not a murderer.... an ascetic is not an ascetic" (*Principal Upaniṣads*, p. 263). On these types of description (com- bining both opposites, expressing pure negation, etc.), particularly in Indian sources, see: R. T. Blackwood. Neti, Neti—Epistemological problems of mystical experience"—*Philosophy East and West*, v. 13, N. 3, 1963, pp. 201-209; O. Lacombe. "Approches négatives de l'absolu dans la pensée indienne"—*La table ronde*, N. 182, 1963, pp. 46-50; Syrkin, *K sistematizacii*, pp. 157 sq.; B. Matilal,

"Mysticism and reality: ineffability"—*Journal of Indian philosophy* v. 3, 1975, pp. 217-252; H.G. Blocker". The language of mysticism"—*The Monist*, v. 59, N. 4, 1976, pp. 551-562; etc. Cf. also M. Eliade. "La coincidentia oppositorum et la mystère de la totalité"—*EJ*, 1958, Bd. XXVII, S. 195 sq. Some opposites discussed here are neutralized in this coincidentia—not only in their metaphorical (social or moral) use, as in the examples drawn above, but literally as well. Cf., e.g., ChU VII. 25. 1-2: "That (infinite) indeed is below. It is above.... it is indeed all this.... I, indeed, am below. I am above.... I, indeed, am all this.... The self (ātmā) indeed is below. The self is above.... The self indeed is all this...." (*Principal Upaniṣads*, pp. 487-488). Similar equations can follow from the device of microcosmic-macrocosmic identifications, so important in the dogmatics of the Upaniṣads (cf. S. Schayer. "Über die Bedeutung des Wortes Upaniṣad"—*Rocznik Orientalistyczny*, t. III, 1927, pp. 57 sq.; A. Syrkin." Sistema otoždestvlenij v Čxandogja upaniṣade," in: "Works on semiotics", II, Tartu, 1965, pp. 278 sq.). An example of such neutralization with respect to tree-symbolism is presented in the universal image of a tree with roots above and branches below (arbor inversa). The tree image is equated particularly with Brahman in Hindu tradition, with Christ in Christian, etc. Cf. KtU II. 3.1; MtU VI. 4; Bg XV. 1-3; etc. Cf. L. von Schroeder. "Lebensbaum und Lebenstraum," in: *Aufsätze zur Kultur- und Sprachgeschichte*, München, 1916, S. 66 sq., C.M. Edsman. "Arbor inversa. Heiland, Welt und Mensch als Himmelspflanzen," in: *Festschrift W. Baetke*, Weimar, 1966, S. 85-109; J. G. Arapura, "The upside down tree in the Bhagavadgītā ch. XV"—*Numen*, v. 22, f. 2, 1975, pp. 131-144; etc.

[98] Cf. an example of a more consecutive neutralization in behaviour of an Indian ascetic, king Śikhidhvaja, practising intercourse with complete equanimity and not even stained by it. Cf. Laghu-yoga-vasiṣṭha, tr. by Narayanaswami Aiyer. Adyar, 1971, pp. 432 sq. (VI.9).

[99] See above, notes 95, 97; e.g., the Upanishadic motto: tat tvam asi—"That thou art"—Ch VI. 8.7 sq.; cf. also BU I. 4.10: aham brahmāsmi; TU I, 5.1: tad brahma, sa ātmā; etc. The Christian analogies to this evidence are found, rather, in non-canonical later tradition of separate mystics and philosophers like Meister Eckhart, Jan van Ruysbroeck, Angelus Silesius, etc. It is not by chance that Meister Eckhart is often compared with Indian religious tradition. Cf. J. Politella. "Meister Eckhart and Eastern wisdom"—*Philosophy East and West*, v. 15, N.1, 1965, pp. 117-133; etc.

[100] Cf. for example, Stith Thompson. *Motif-index of Folk-literature*, v. I, Copenhague, 1955, pp. 94, 124, 205 sq.; v. III, 1956, pp. 10 sq.; etc.—v. I, pp. 94, 105, 118, 205; v. III, pp. 9, 14 sq.; etc. (on ascent and descent respectively).

[101] The division of saviours and teachers into godlike and humanlike is indeed rather conditional, particularly within the framework of the Hindu concept of transmigration. Neither does it always tally with the historicity of corresponding persons—so, e.g., the images of Gotama Buddha or Mahāvīra appear to be more authentic than those of some Hindu sages.

[102] Cf. above, notes 19, 100. This symbolism is found in the letters as well (cf., e.g., the role of allegorical descent and the symbols of the well, the pit, etc. in T. Mann's *Joseph und seine Brüder*).

[103] Cf. note 94. See M. Winternitz. "Zur Lehre von den Āśramas", in: *Beiträge zur Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte Indiens*. Festgabe H. Jacobi, Bonn, 1926, S. 215-227; F. Weinreich." Entwicklung und Theorie der Āśrama-Lehre im Umriss" *Archiv für Religionswissenschaft*, Bd. 27, 1929, S. 77-92; A. Syrkin. "Nekotorye oboznačenija aśram v upaniṣadax," in: *Ksiega pamiatkowa ku czci E.*

Słuszkiewicza. Warszawa, 1974, pp. 230-233. Concerning the semantic structure of the corresponding group of notions and their correlation with some other basic Hindu concepts cf. also: Syrkin. *K sistematizacii*, pp. 150 sq.; 161.

[104] It was traditionally sought not only by gods but by other legendary persons (like, e.g., vedic sages Viśvāmitra, Agastya, a.o.) and by mortals, particularly shivaite ascetics, like pāśupatas. This goal is accepted in Hindu tradition, where it is based on the belief in the supernatural effects of austerity and self-discipline and is often combined with moral superiority. At the same time it was more than once denounced by Buddha, who himself was endowed with such capacities (in this respect the divine pupils of the Buddha are nearer to the traditional student's image—cf. above, n. 44).

[105] Cf. for example: W. D. O'Flaherty. *Ascetism and eroticism in the mythology of Śiva*, London, 1973, pp. 141 sq.; 210 sq.

[106] *Principal Upaniṣads*, p. 857. Cf. above, note 39.

[107] See Renou, *L'ambiguïté*; M . Eliade, *Traité d'histoire des religions*. Paris, 1953, pp. 126 sq.; 393; A. Syrkin. "Černoe solnce", *Kratkie soobščenija Instituta narodov Azii*, 80, 1965, pp. 27 sq.; O'Flaherty. *Op. cit.* pp. 33 sq.; etc. This attitude seems to be inherent in the religious cult, which needs a definite quota of those ambivalent characteristics that were not excluded but, on the contrary, canonized in corresponding texts. The specific gravity of this ambivalence evidently varies with respect to the object of cult. Thus we have a single or main relatively more ambivalent deity in the monotheistic or henotheistic systems, or one deity correlated with other in the dualistic or polytheistic systems, where the complementary distribution of corresponding traits is possible. Cf. Syrkin. *K. xarakteristike*, pp. 167 sq.; concerning the distribution of these characteristics cf. also: J. M. Roberts, Chiao Chein, T. N. Pandey. "Meaningful god sets from a Chinese personal pantheon and a Hindu personal pantheon"—*Ethnology*, vol. 14, N.2, 1975, pp. 121-148. Cf. also note 26.

[108] Note, e.g., the contrast between the god's terrifying theophany in Bg. XI. 10sq. and his highest transcendent state (ibid. VI, 27 sq.; VII. 24 sq.; IX. 28 sq.; etc.). Cf. R. C. Zaehner. "Utopia and beyond: some Indian views"—*EJ*, 1963, Bd. XXXII, S. 296 sq.

[109] Cf. e.g., Sparks, *Op. cit.*, pp. 192 sq.; J. Filliozat." Docétisme chrétien et docétisme indien," in: *Laghu-prabandhāḥ*, Leiden, 1974, pp. 53, 55; etc.

[110] Cf. Thomas. *Op. cit.*, p. 196; *The world of Jainism*, p. 86; etc.

[111] Apart from the mystic tradition (cf. note 99) the Christian canonical evidence usually indicates such a "Self"—"not-Self" equation stressing the ethical aspect of the transformation—cf. the commandment "to love your neighbour as yourself" (Lev. 19.18 and later in Mt 22.39; Mr 12. 33; etc.). It does not, however, set forth this equation with Hindu categorical preciseness.

[112] Concerning some aspects of comparison between the Indian theophanic tradition and that of Christianity cf. Sparks. *Op. cit.* pp. 192 sq.; Filliozat, *Docétisme*, pp. 52-58; etc.

The following abbreviations are used:

AN – Aṅguttara Nikāya; Bg – Bhagavadgītā; BP – Bhāgavata purāṇa; BU – Bṛhadāraṇyaka upaniṣad; ChU – Chāndogya upaniṣad; DhP – Dhammapada; DN – Dīgha nikāya; *EJ* – *Erans Jahrbuch*; *JAOS* – *Journal of the American Oriental*

Society; KauU – Kauṣītaki upaniṣad; KtU – Kaṭha upaniṣad; Man – Mānavadhar-maśāstra; ,aU – Māṇḍūkya upaniṣad; Mbh – Mahābhārata; MtU – Maitrī upaniṣad; MuU – Muṇḍaka upaniṣad; MN – Majjhima nikāya; MP – Matsya purāṇa; PS – Pāśupata sūtra; PU – Praśna upaniṣad; RV – Ṛgveda; Sn – Sutta nipata; SB – Śatapatha brāhmaṇa; SU – Śvetāśvatara upaniṣad; TB – Taittirīya brāhmaṇa; TU – Taittirīya upaniṣad; *ZDMG – Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenlän-dischen Gesellschaft.*

"I CREATED LAND AND SEA":
A TAMIL CASE OF GOD-CONSCIOUSNESS
AND ITS ŚRĪVAIṢṆAVA
INTERPRETATION

Francis X. Clooney

Tirukkurukaippirāṉpiḷḷāṉ (b.1161), Nañcīyar (1182-1287), Periyavāccāṉpiḷḷai (b.1228) and Vaṭakkuttiruvītippiḷḷai (1217-1312) were commentators in the Śrīvaiṣṇava community of south India, and theologians in the school of Rāmānuja (1017-1137).[1] They explained Tamil devotional poetry by bringing to bear on it the learning of the Sanskrit, Vedānta tradition. In their thorough commentaries on the works of the Āḻvārs, the Vaiṣṇava saints of the 7th-10th centuries, they "understood" the experiences of these Tamil saints in part by locating them within the framework of the Rāmānuja's Viśiṣṭādnaita ("qualified non-dualism") Vedānta. In doing so, however, they also significantly developed the Vedānta beyond its classic expression in Rāmānuja's works.

This essay seeks to contribute toward a better understanding of their methodology, the issues which guide their interpretation, and the overall effect of their intertwining Sanskrit and Tamil ways of thinking,[2] by examing one fascinating example of commentary, their introductions to a song wherein the most important Āḻvār, Nammāḻvār, portrays a young girl singing out of "God-consciousness," as if she herself were Lord of the world.[3] My exposition falls into four parts: a brief exposition of Nammāḻvār's song, its own structure and "self-interpretation;" description of how the four above-mentioned commentators understood the song; location, following the lead of their own citations, of their inter-pretations within the Viśiṣṭādvaita of Rāmānuja; finally, a preliminary evaluation of this kind of commentatorial method, pointing to the way their commentaries achieve a new synthesis in Hindu thought irreducible to anything preceding them, Tamil or Sanskrit.

Nammālvār's Song 5.6 in Context

In the sixth song of the fifth "book" of his great *Tiruvāymoli*, Nammālvār depicts a mother speaking about her daughter to the people of the town, responding to their (and her own) presumed doubts about her daughter's behavior when the daughter is heard, as is quoted in the verses, to speak as God, in the first person.[4] Each of the ten verses of the song is structured the same way: (a) a quotation of the girl's words (b) the suggestion, by means of a question, that she speaks thus beause the Lord has entered her, and (c) a corresponding rebuke, also in the form of a question, addressed to the townspeople that they are limited precisely in regard to that in which she excels. The first two verses give the idea and the theme:

> (a) She says:
> "I created land and sea,
> I became land and sea
> I held land and sea
> I split land and sea
> I ate land and sea."
> (b) Has the Lord of land and sea come and entered her?
> (c) What can I say to you people of land and sea
> about the things
> my daughter of land and sea
> has learned?
> (a) She says:
> "I have no limits in my learning
> I become learning
> I make learning
> I end learning
> I am the essence of learning."
> (b) Has the Lord of learning come and entered her?
> (c) What can I say to you learned people
> about the things
> my learned daughter
> has seen? (5.6.1-2)[5]

The pattern is repeated in each of the following verses, only the content of her claim changing: seeing (3), deeds (4), heroic deeds (5), things attained (6), relations (7), the gods (8), cruel deeds (9), and the after-life (10). None of the verses says explicitly that she is possessed—it is only posed as a possibility that she has been entered by the Lord—and certainly none attempts to theorize about how her remarkable speech is possible. Rather, what might be called "horizons of encompassment" are skillfully and elegantly placed in

tension. Thus, in the first verse, the girl encompasses the world and
assumes the stance of creator/controller in relation to it, *because* the
creator/controller has encompassed her by entering her. His entry
into her enables her to appropriate his relationship to the world.
But the townspeople are merely part of the world, encompassed by
it and not encompassing it, and so cannot understand what is hap-
pening "around them." The net result is to show why the
townspeople cannot comprehend what is happening, but this is not
stated directly.

This song, like all the songs in *Tiruvāymoḻi*, has an eleventh con-
cluding (*nigama*) verse appended to it, which steps back as it were
from the song itself and encourages hearers to learn and repeat the
song for promised rewards of earthly prosperity and divine bless-
ings.[6] The eleventh and concluding verse to 5.6. is the only part of
the song which consciously advances our understanding of the girl's
condition beyond the "understated" message of the ten main
verses. We hear the promise,

> ...Those who are proficient in these ten verses will act
> to please the servants of the lord,
>   greatly prosperous and praised in the world.

The key word here is "to please", in Tamil *pūcikka*, from the
Sanskrit root *pūj*. To offer *pūjā* can mean simply to honor or please
someone, and the commentators interpret it thus: singing this song
pleases the community, just as Nammāḻvār's devotion does. Yet
pūjā of course refers also to the explicit act of worship in a temple
where the divine image (*arcā*) is present. If the song establishes that
the Āḻvār/girl has been entered by God so fully that she speaks as
God, then to honor her (*pūcikka*) is to honor God embodied in her,
to perform *pūjā* (*pūcikka*). Likewise "in our time," devotees of
Viṣṇu are like the Āḻvār because God is in them too; to reverence
them is to worship the God who has entered within them. It is possi-
ble that this remarkable attitude toward community members is the
transposed meaning of the song for a community not normally
ecstatic and, in fact, rather cautious and conservative.

Finally, we must note that within the larger context, the Fifth
Book of *Tiruvāymoḻi*, there is no explicit connection or "story line"
connecting this song with those before and after It.[7] The book con-
sists of five girl songs and five which may be taken as simply in the

poet's own (male) voice, and no evident "plot" links the songs to one another. 5.5 describes one of the darkest moods of the girl in the entire *Tiruvāymoḻi*, where she spends a night in separation from her lover, totally alone; the night is compared to the endless night which precedes and follows a cycle of world-existence. 5.7 begins with the famous protestation of the Ālvār of his lack of knowledge and works, and continues as the Ālvār's plea to reach the Lord who dwells in Śrīvaramaṅgalanagar. The stark contrast in moods is quite effective, but neither song reveals any necessary connection to 5.6.

The Commentators

In his introduction to the song (Tirukkurukaippirāṉ) Piḷḷāṉ states the primary line of explanation of the "plot" which the subsequent commentators follow as well.[8] According to Piḷḷāṉ, the girl's ecstatic cry quoted by the mother in 5.6 is the result of the girl's effort to survive the terrible dark night of depression described in 5.5; the song itself is the mother's attempt to explain this unusual state to uncomprehending neighbors. Piḷḷāṉ's comment in full is as follows:

> Thus her depression at separation from the Lord is great. The girl, unable to persevere at sustaining herself because of her excessive depression, says, "I will survive as the *gopi*s did, by imitating the divine deeds of the lord of rich Dvārā, all his works such as creating the world, etc.," and becomes engrossed (in imitating the Lord.) Her mother sees her in this state and tells the women who come to ask that "Her statements are astonishing; unless it is that the Lord has entered her, it is impossible to determine the nature of her supernatural deeds."[9]

This interpretation reminds us that the commentators read the whole of *Tiruvāymoḻi* as the Ālvār's story of his states of periodic union and separation from the Lord, and thereby his exposition of the greatness of God and the path of purification and devotion leading to God. The *experience* of the Ālvār, his moods of exaltation and depression, become the primary data for Śrīvaiṣṇava spirituality, and each song is interpreted as exemplifying some moment in the Ālvār's journey toward the Lord.

Nañcīyar, the first commentator to write an introduction to *Tiruvāymoḻi* as a whole, gives several reasons for the inclusion in

Tiruvāymoḻi of states of union and separation from the Lord: In his
fullness of desire, the Āḻvār immerses himself in each of the Lord's
qualities; but in doing so he is unable to experience all the others
fully at the same time, and so grieves; he grieves at the fading over
time of the various experiences, due to his forgetfulness, etc.; he
grieves for the sake of all creation, which he assumes seeks the Lord
as eagerly as he does; even though the whole of his experience is
present to him always, he reflects on his moods one at a time.[10] 5.6,
as Piḷḷāṉ's interpretation suggests and Nañcīyar's schema leads us
to expect, describes a particularly powerful moment of union within
the overall journey which is *Tiruvāymoḻi*, and one in telling contrast
with the song preceding it.[11]

We shall return later to the significance of the interplay of this
extraordinary sensitivity to the moods of the saint with the poem's
own (not totally) different one and with the frame of Rāmānuja's
Viśiṣṭādvaita Vedānta. I merely point out now that this emphasis
on experience is not derived from the commentators' Sanskrit
background with its more "static" models of awareness, and is
already important evidence that they are learning from the songs
they interpret.

Piḷḷāṉ and Nañcīyar refer to the *gopis*, who danced ecstatically
with Kṛṣṇa and then continued to do so in his absence to assuage
their grief at his absence, but only Vaṭakkuttiruvītippiḷḷai offers and
explicit reference to the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* chapter they probably have in
mind, 5.13. Here is the pertinent text in full, with the words cited
by Vaṭakkuttiruvītippiḷḷai emphasized:[12]

> Surrounded by the cowherd women, Govinda paid honor to the beautiful
> moonlit autumn night, eager for the pleasure of beginning the dance. Crowds
> of women, their bodies carefully following Kṛṣṇa's gestures, called aloud to
> one another, *"I am lord Kṛṣṇa! See my amorous movements!"* One spoke up,
> "Listen to my song, the song of Kṛṣṇa!" *"Stop there, wicked Kāliya!* I am
> Kṛṣṇa! said another, slapping her arm defiantly in imitation of the Lord
> (5.13.23-26)

Reading the song against this background is natural, even
though Nammāḻvār's verses do not demand that this connection be
made. Nammāḻvār, like the girls, is trying to assuage the suffering
of separation by assuming the *persona* of the Lord. Below we shall
see that the commentators distinguish between Nammāḻvār's state
and that of the *gopis*.

In any case, what interests the commentators is the fact that Nammālvār as girl boldly uses the word "I" to speak as Krsna. They feel required to explain how this identification with the deity is legitimate in Nammālvār's case, as more that the alternative drug- or spell-induced psychological state which the townspeople, in Nañcīyar's exposition, ask about: "Has this state come about due to spells and potions and the like? (*mantra-ausadha-ādi*) or due to herself?"

Nañcīyar also explains that people are surprised by "her similarity (*sādharmya*) to Krsna the Teacher of the *Gītā* (*Gītācārya*) in speech (*vacana*) and demeanor (*vyakti*)," and other characteristics of a teacher.[13] This is a step beyond what Pillān has said, since the Krsna associated with the *gopis* in the *Visnu Purāna* text is not the stately teacher of the *Gītā*—although, of course, since the devotional tradition gradually conflates the images, we need not claim that these commentators were the first to make the connection. This correlation of the girl with the teacher of the *Gītā* reaffirms a basic point made by Nañcīyar in his general introduction to *Tiruvāymoli*, that Nammālvār is our teacher par excellence, the teacher who excells the *rsis* of the Vedas by presenting God to us in terms we can understand.

Nañcīyar then focuses the reference to the *Gītā*, when he concludes his comment by stating that "she imitates him (Krsna) to an extraordinary extent as the 'Vibhūti-Adhyāya' of the *Gītā*." "Vibhūti-adhyāya" is the traditional name given to the 10th Adhyāya of the *Bhagavad Gītā*, wherein Krsna reveals to Arjuna his *vibhūti*, "glory."[14] The word *vibhūti* appears six times in the adhyāya (10.7, 16, 18, 19, 40, 41), and 19ff. in particular are Krsna's revelation of this *vibhūti*, in response to Arjuna's request in 18, "Tell me fully, in detail, the *yoga* and *vibhūti* of your self (*ātman*), Janardana, for I am never sated with hearing this nectar."[15]

But the most pertinent point is that Krsna reveals his glory in a series of "I" statements very much like Nammālvār's. His declaration begins thus:

> I am the Self established in the heart of all contingent
>   beings;
> I am the beginning, the middle, and the end of all
>   contingent beings too.

> Among the Ādityas I am Viṣṇu,
> > among the lights the radiant sun,
> > among the Maruts I am Marīci,
> > among stars I am the moon. (10.20-21)

Nañcīyar thus boldly parallels the *Tiruvāymoḻi* song and its series of "I" with Kṛṣṇa's divine self-manifestation. Although he is not equating Kṛṣṇa and Nammāḻvār, since Kṛṣṇa speaks "by right" and Nammāḻvār "by grace," the parallel suggests that "when one hears these bold 'I' claims of the girl, one should think of the 'I' claims of Kṛṣṇa in the *Gītā*;" as Kṛṣṇa fills the universe with his glory, Nammāḻvār realizes that his entire self is nothing but the radiance of that same God.[16] Periyavāccāṇpiḷḷai and Vaṭakkut-tiruvītippiḷḷai expatiate on the nature of Nammāḻvār's experience of God-identity, and to their expansions we may now turn.

First, Periyavāccāṇpiḷḷai states that the girl surpasses the *gopis*, since she imitates the Lord not with imitative deeds—i.e., "play-acting"—as they did, but by speaking his words. Because she has attained the excellence of a mind purified of illusion (*mayarvaramatinalam*) she imitates the Lord not only in the context of a single *avatāra*, as they do, but "with His *vibhūti*", his pervasive glory. Vaṭakkuttiruvītippiḷḷai explicates somewhat further by saying, "They imitate the deeds there because of experiencing one *avatāra*. Because by grace she has attained this purified mind, she imitates him as described in *both vibhūtis*, transcendent as well as in this world."[17]

After then mentioning the 10th chapter of the *Gītā* as did Nañcīyar, he adds a final comment:

> Previously (in previous songs), the uniqueness of his (perceptible) form was spoken of; here she meditates on the *svarūpa* within that form. Just as, if the conceit that the body is the self ends the one no longer appears as the other, so here in meditating on himself even as far as the *prakārin*[18] *there is no problem in his then speaking thus (as the Lord), because of an extraordinarily heightened mood (bhāvanāprakarṣa)*. As it is said,
> "I became Manu and the sun" (Ṛg. 4.26.1;
> Bṛh.1.4.10)
> "After attaining that state..." (UP 6.7.93)
> "From me comes all; I am all" (UP 1.19.85)

In the third section of this essay we shall see that all three quotations are used by Rāmānuja, linked by him in at least two important contexts; it is likely that they came to Periyavāccāṇpiḷḷai

through Rāmānuja. However, since they are quoted here without any reference to Rāmānuja and are in themselves quite relevant to the kind of higher consciousness being discussed here, I wish to discuss each briefly, apart from consideration of Rāmānuja's use of the terms.

The first three verses of *Rg* 4.26 constitute a very early instance of a human person speaking in the "absolute" first person. The *ṛṣi* Vāmadeva, to whom many of the *sūktas* in the 4th Maṇḍala are attributed, proclaims his divine identity:

> I became Manu, and the Sun;
> I am Kakṣīvān the ṛṣi, the wise;
> I have subdued Kutsa, the son of Arjunī;
> I am the far-seeing Uśanā, so behold me.
> I gave the earth to the venerable (Manu);
> I have bestowed rain upon the mortal who honors
> (the gods);
> I have led forth the sounding waters;
> the gods obey my will.
> Intoxicated I have destroyed the ninety and nine
> cities of Śambara;
> The hundreth I gave completely to the hospitable
> Divodāsa when I protected him.[19]

The hymn then turns to a more specifically ritual theme, without further explanation of Vāmadeva's claim. Only "intoxication" (by *soma*) is suggested as a reason for the exalted mood. Sāyaṇa, the great medieval commentator on the *Rg Veda*, explains the three verses by saying that here "Vāmadeva, even in the womb, already has knowledge of reality, and shows, by way of 'Manu, etc.' his own experience as the self of all;" but nothing is said in the verses to indicate any more than the assumption of the characteristics of a god, most likely Indra.

Sāyaṇa is probably reading the passage through its citation in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, where an explicit theory of the self and *brahman* appears;

> This *brahman* was indeed in the beginning. It knew only itself, "I am *brahman*." Therefore it became all. And whoever among the gods knew it also became that; and the same with sages and men.
> For the sage Vāmadeva, while seeing this (individual self) as that (supreme self), realized, "I became Manu, and the sun". And to this day whoever in like manner knows this, "I am *brahman*," becomes all this.[20]

The reference to Vāmadeva thus has its own history—which we shall follow further below by noting its citation by Bādarayaṇa in the *Uttara Mīmāṃsā Sūtras* and explication by Rāmānuja; the commentators on Nammālvār are not the first to use the reference for a new purpose. In general, however, the point of introducing the reference in explaining *Tiruvāymoli* 5.6 is clear: what happened to Vāmadeva, such that he could speak so boldly, is analogous to what happened to Nammālvār.[21] In the upaniṣadic context the interpretation moves away from the influence of intoxicants such as *soma* to a metaphysical basis, and this in particular appeals to the commentators.

The second citation given by Periyavāccāṉpiḷḷai is from the important 7th chapter of the 6th *adhyāya* of the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*.[22] It is traditionally called the *śubhāśraya prakaraṇa* or "section on the "auspicious abode,'" and as such seeks the ultimate and proper basis for concentrated meditation (*dhāraṇā*). In a difficult and not entirely synthesized description of the yogic process, it integrates classical yoga with tantric and devotional elements, and finally presents the highly significant—in the later tradition—meditation on the *physical* form of Viṣṇu as the object of concentration. When the process has been described up to *samādhi* as its final step, Keśidvaja the narrator goes on to say,

> After attaining that state (of release, *mokṣa*) he becomes non-different from the highest self; difference would be the result of a lack of knowledge. When that ignorance which is the cause of the difference is completely destroyed, who shall ever devise a non-existent distinction between the self and *brahman*? (6.7.93-94)

The first, emphasized words are those cited by Periyavāccāṉpiḷḷai; he cites this text in order to illuminate the non-different condition of Nammālvār. There is no declaration of an absolute "I" here, but the yogic process is shown to lead to that final state in which there is non-distinction of self and *brahman*—and it is by means of meditation on the detailed, physical form of Viṣṇu (6.7.77). The implication, of course, is that this is precisely what Nammālvār has achieved, and that he has achieved it in the same way, like the yogin but also like the girl seeking her lovely Lord and remembering his physical beauty; from such remembering his "I am God" experience arises. In *Tiruvāymoli* 5.6 he shows himself to have reached the self-realization which is *samādhi*.[23]

When our attention has thus been called to this text we are better able understand the richer meaning of that "support of the self" (*ātmadhāraṇā*) for the sake of which the girl initially undertook imitation of the *gopis*. Her strategy of survival is not merely sustenance of her self (a minimal and literal *ātmadhāraṇā*), but a return to what the *purāṇa* calls the *śubhāśraya*, "the auspicious abode," the inner place on which self rests. A kind of obsession with the absent, *physical* lover causes the girl's depression but also focuses her and gives her something to rely on, her proper *dhāraṇā*. This focus, by a Vedāntic theological extension, gives her access to God-within, her true *ātman* within the *ātman*. Thus a remarkable synthesis is made, in the *purāṇa* to some extent but even more surely in the commentators on *Tiruvāymoḻi*: the recounting of a forlorn girl's search for the beloved merges with the fulfillment of the yogic quest and the validation of the Vedāntic doctrine of the *ātman* within all selves—and it all depends on the material (*mūrta*) form of Viṣṇu.[24]

The third quotation may be handled more briefly. At the end of the fifth chapter of the first book of the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*, Prahlāda is surviving another set of persecutions and attempted assassinations by his father. Bound up and buried at the bottom of the ocean, he sings a long hymn in praise of Viṣṇu his protector which concludes,[25]

> Reverence to that Viṣṇu, to him again and again, in whom all is, from whom all proceeds, who is all, and in whom all things rest! Because the infinite one is everywhere, he alone constitutes my "I." *All things are from me. I am all things*, all things exist in me who am everlasting. I alone am undecaying, ever enduring, my self is the receptacle of the highest self. I alone am named *brahman*, the highest man who is in the beginning and the end. (1.19.84-86)

The next chapter begins by describing how Prahlāda meditates on Viṣṇu as identical with himself, forgets himself and finally realizes, "I am indestructible, infinite, the highest self." (1.20.1-2) He realizes by pure devotion the state of unity with Viṣṇu which enables him to use the word "I" to describe both himself and Viṣṇu. The comparison to Prahlāda suggests that Nammāḻvār is not only the perfect sage like Vāmadeva and the perfect yogin in *samādhi*; he is the true *bhakta*, like Prahlāda, and his ecstasy is the product of a devotional appropropriation of Vedāntic truth.

Vaṭakkuttiruvītippiḷḷai introduces a final text and comparison.[26]

> In the *Atharvaśiras* Rudra has been speaking in order to set forth his own glory, and there is (revealed) lordly power which cannot be confined to him. When the question is raised in Scripture, "What is the basis for his saying this?" (the text) explains that he speaks thus because the highest self has entered into him: "He then entered within…" When this kind of state comes about, one speaks in this fashion.

The reference is to the beginning of the *Atharvaśiras Upaniṣad*, a Śaivite work wherein Rudra, asked by the gods who he is, responds with a long series of 'absolute I'' statements:

> The gods went to heaven; they asked Rudra, "Who are you, sir?"
> He replied,
> "I am one; I was in the beginning, I am, and will be.
> There is no one apart from me."
> He entered within from within,[27] and entered the directions:
> "I am eternal, and non-eternal;
> I am *brahman*, I am non-*brahman*;
> I am east, and west;
> I am south, and north…" (2-4a)

The text is appropriate to his interpretation of Nammālvār, combining as it does a series of absolute "I" statements with the notion of God entering into creation; indeed, it reflects the sentiment of the Tamil itself, where the girl's "I" statements are linked, in the mother's mind, with the entrance of God into her. The specific and sectarian point here of course is not the glorification of Rudra, but the idea that those who are not Viṣṇu—Nammālvār, Rudra, etc.—speak in an absolute fashion because of the presence of God within them.

To sum up what has been seen thus far: the commentators defend the validity of Nammālvār's experience and exalt it by comparisons with several well-known cases from the Sanskrit tradition. The series of citations serve both to point out precedents for the girl's unusual behavior and to highlight from different angles Nammālvār's unique experience: he is an ideal lover of Kṛṣṇa, like the *gopis*; he is the ideal devotee even in suffering, like Prahlāda; he is the seer of the new Veda, like the wise Vāmadeva; he is our ideal teacher, like Kṛṣṇa; he is divine, in the sense that Rudra is divine. Their reading of all the cited texts together is a new synthesis, identifying parallels in the Vedic and Sanskrit traditions with the Tamil and devotional; the *gopis* are given an honored albeit subordinate place, side by side with seers and yogins.

So too, their reading of 5.6 as part of a longer phychological development of Nammālvār's holiness adds a new "developmental" perspective to yogic and Vedāntic spirituality. Even *ātman*-consciousness and *samādhi* are seen simply as experiences "along the way" toward the full experience of God which *Tiruvāymoḻi* reveals to us.

Rāmānuja

As noted above, although Rāmānuja is not mentioned by the commentators, it is probable that their choice of texts is governed—with two exceptions which we will note below—by a choice of texts made by Rāmānuja in the *Śrībhāṣya* and the *Vedārthasaṃgraha*. In the *Śrībhāṣya* at 1.1.31 Rāmānuja explains the *sūtra*, which refers explicitly to Vāmadeva, in part by adding the one about Prahlāda from *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* 1.19. Towards the end of the *Vedārthasaṃgraha*, in a section demonstrating textually the pervasion of the universe by the Lord—and therefore also of language about the world and its contents—Rāmānuja cites again the texts about Prahlāda and Vāmadeva, adds the *Atharvaśiras* text and refers to the *śubhāśraya* chapter of the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*.

When the commentators cite the same texts Rāmānuja did, it is likely not only that they knew of his citations, but also that they carefully considered the Vedāntic context and issues Rāmānuja was discussing.[28] My consideration here is limited to ascertaining the extent to which the *intellectual framework* of Viśiṣṭādvaita, out of which Rāmānuja cites these texts, is operative and influential in the effort of the commentators to shed light on Nammālvār's experience of God-consciousness; Viśiṣṭādvaita becomes a kind of third horizon (beyond that of the poem itself and the psychological story) merged in the commentatorial tradition.

Regarding the first context, that in the *Uttara Mīmāṃsā Sūtras*: Bādarayaṇa is near the end of the investigation (which has occupied the first *pāda* of the *Sūtras*) into the true and ultimate import of certain Scriptural texts which appear to glorify a number of central and absolute realities which, when properly understood, are recognized to be nothing but *brahman*.

The last two *adhikaraṇa*s of the *pāda*, 25-28 and 29-32, advance the discussion in that they introduce texts which refer to "terms which in ordinary language are applied to certain other well-known beings," terms such as "light" and "Indra," "represented as possessing some one or other supremely exalted quality that is invariably connected with world-creative power;" such words, the *sūtra*s demonstrate, refer only to the "highest *brahman*."[29] The second of these *adhikaraṇa*s, 29-32 is the one which includes the reference to Vāmadeva. It begins by referring to a text from the *Kauṣītaki Brāhmaṇa* in which Indra makes an absolute claim about himself, "I am *prāṇa*, the intelligent self; meditate on me as Life, as Immortality." (*KB* 3.1)[30] The question is whether the declaration establishes the independent importance and absoluteness of Indra, or refers 'really' to the *brahman* within Indra. The *pūrvapakṣa* is that since in the context Indra is identified by his individual heroic deeds such as the slaying of Tvaṣṭr, the reference cannot be to any self beyond Indra's individual self—unless we were to claim that *brahman* slew Tvaṣṭr!

According to Rāmānuja, sūtras 29-31 offer three reasons why the text properly refers to the highest self; the first two of which may be briefly noted. First, in 1.1.29, "Indra" (which may also refer to "*prāṇa*") is connected with terms such as "blessed," "non-ageing," and "immortal," in texts such as "That *prāṇa* is the intelligent self, blessed, non-ageing, immortal." (*KB* 3.9) Such coordinated reference[31] of both "*prāṇa*" and "immortal" to one referent—Indra—would not be possible if Indra were merely one more individual being; the Indra who is *prāṇa* is also immortal, etc., and this "Indra"/*prāṇa* must also be *brahman*, who alone is immortal. Second, in 1.1.30,[32] it is noted that the *brāhmaṇa* text reports Indra as promising release to those who meditate on him; such a promise is plausible only if "Indra" indicates that highest self the knowledge of which alone can give release.

The third reason, in 1.1.31, begins by distinguishing, in keeping with the *sūtra* (*śāstradṛṣṭyā...*) between intuition into the self based on Scripture and intuition of the self based on other means. On the basis of texts which speak of the entry of the self into all things,

Indra has learned that the highest self has the individual souls for its body, and that hence words such as "I" and "thou" which denote individual

beings, extend in their connotation up to the highest Self. When, therefore he says, "Know me only," and "Meditate on me," he really means to teach that the highest Self, of which his own individual person is the body, is the highest object of meditation.[33]

The *sūtra* itself referred to the *śāstras*, texts teaching the reality of the absolute self, and Rāmānuja introduces several citations (primarily upaniṣadic) in support of the idea that *brahman* enters within and pervades all. Then he attends to the reference in the *sūtra* to Vāmadeva, "as in the case of Vāmadeva," cites the same *Ṛg Veda/Bṛhadāraṇyaka* text we saw above, and then explains,

as the *ṛṣi* Vāmadeva perceiving that *brahman* is the inner Self of all, that all things constitute its body, and that the meaning of words denoting a body extends up to the principle embodied, denotes with the word "I" the highest *brahman* to which he himself stands in the relation of a body, and then predicates of this "I" Manu, Sūrya and other beings.

The basis of Vāmadeva's claim is not only not ecstasy by *soma*, it is also no longer reducible to the ontology proposed in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*; it is now founded on the Vaiṣṇava theory of *brahman* as Viṣṇu, whereby all reality is the body of this absolute God. Rāmānuja then cites the text regarding Prahlāda from the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* 1.19, "Because the infinite one is everywhere, he alone he constitutes my 'I.' All things are from me. I am all things, all things exist in me who am everlasting."

In general, three points are made by Rāmānuja: a. *brahman* is the self of all; b. consequently, because all things are *brahman*'s body, words about those things legitimately refer ultimately to *brahman*; c. the absolute "I" can therefore be used to refer to any of these things, because *brahman* is their "I." The citation by the Vaiṣṇava commentators of the Prahlāda and Vāmadeva texts together evokes this context, and invites a reading of Nammālvār's experience according to the points made by Rāmānuja. *Brahman*, the self of all, is the self of Nammālvār as he sings in *Tiruvāymoli* 5.6, and Nammālvār is his body. Therefore, even the word "I" referred to Nammālvār by himself properly and ultimately indicates *brahman/Viṣṇu*. The girl's ecstatic cry therefore illustrates the central tenets of Viśiṣṭādvaita Vedānta. It is not just the product of a passing mood, nor a temporary gift of grace, nor an achieved result in yoga, nor, finally, even the event of divine entrance into a human. Rather, it is preeminently the revelation of the unchanging

metaphysical basis of all reality—and Nammālvār is the preeminent revealer of that basis.

Toward the end of the *Vedārthasaṃgraha*, Rāmānuja seeks to strengthen by Scriptural citation his argument that Viṣṇu pervades all things and is therefore the ultimate referent of terms denoting them. I will point only to those sections of Rāmānuja's extended exposition which cite the quotations used above regarding Nammālvār.

First, (in 104)[34] Rāmānuja recalls the text we have just examined and the example of Vāmadeva to assert that Viṣṇu or Nārayaṇa is the ultimate referent of all names, even those of the other gods such as Brahmā, Śiva, etc. Second (108), after stating that Vāmadeva has voluntarily descended into the multiplicity of material reality and therefore remains the sole proper object of meditation, Rāmānuja refers a second time to *Uttara Mīmāṃsā Sūtras* 1.1.31, this time coupling it with both the *Atharvaśiras Upaniṣad* text referring to Rudra and the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* text referring to Prahlāda. This somewhat extended quotation brings all three quotations together:

> We have explained before that it is Nārayaṇa whom the contexts that deal with creation and resorption declare to be the supreme cause. If in the *Atharvaśiras Upaniṣad* Rudra enlarges upon his own universal sovereignty, then this is true—as witness *so 'ntarād antaraṃ prāviśat*—in so far as the Supreme Spirit has entered into him: this is made clear by the *śruti* itself. The author of the *Sūtras* declares in *śāstradṛṣtyā tu upadeśo Vāmadevavat* that this is the meaning of statements of this type; like that of Prahlāda for example: "Because the Infinite One is omnipresent, I am He, All is from me, I am all, all is in me everlasting, etc." Here the ground is that the Infinite one is omnispresent: the Supreme Spirit is omnipresent as the immanent soul of all spiritual and non-spiritual entities which constitute his own body...all words denotes the Supreme Spirit Himself as embodied by all entities. Hence the word "I" denotes the Supreme Spirit as the substance modified by a mode of which he himself is the soul.[35]

The last sentence in particular is exactly what the commentators need to harmonize Nammālvār's experience and Rāmānuja's theology; the Tamil saint perfectly illustrates *and* validates the Sanskrit theologian's doctrine.

Finally (113), Rāmānuja refers to the *śubhāśraya* text, *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* 6.7, in order to explain how, because Viṣṇu *freely* chooses to enter creation and is neither bound nor defiled by the imperfections of the world, the "body of Viṣṇu" remains unique and perfect. His

presence within the world is its sole support, and the purpose of yoga is to discover Viṣṇu's underlying presence in all the things—including other gods and one's own self—which had hitherto seemed to be independent realities. Nammālvār testifies to the truth of this divine presence.

This *Vedārthasaṃgraha* text therefore confirms the *Śrībhāṣya* text in regard to the points our commentators are interested in. Nammālvār's experience of ecstasy is located within the realm of intelligibility defined by Viśiṣṭādvaita Vedānta, and therefore his experience is explained on metaphysical grounds. But, it must be emphasized, this locaton does not mean that Nammālvār's experience is nothing but an example of Vedānta principles. The Vedānta itself is being illuminated by Nammālvār's "modern" revelatory experience; indeed, if we take seriously the traditional claim that there is continuity between the religion of the Ālvārs and that of Rāmānuja, it is conceivable that just such texts as *Tiruvāymoḻi* 5.6 constitute the inspiration of the Viśiṣṭādvaita itself.

To conclude, we may note the texts Rāmānuja does *not* cite in these contexts, the *Vibhūti Adhyāya* of the *Gītā* and *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* 5 concerning the *gopis*. It was perhaps simply not appropriate for Rāmānuja to cite the *Gītā* text, since Kṛṣṇa *is* Viṣṇu and not, like Indra or Vāmadeva or Nammālvār, merely a created being normally described as "not-Viṣṇu:" Kṛṣṇa's ordinary name is his most profound metaphysical name.

Perhaps Rāmānuja's reticence about reliance on devotional sources makes him omit reference to the *gopis*, even when citing the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*. Perhaps too he did not feel that their temporary and induced identification with the absolute adequately expressed the underlying identity he held to be always present. It is the achievement of the commentators to make the link of the Vedāntic and ecstatic modes of absolute consciousness.[36]

Conclusions

In the preceding pages we have examined one fertile example of how the Vaiṣṇava commentators went about interpreting the songs of Nammālvār; we have learned too what they thought of God-possession, ecstatic or otherwise. To what extent are they successful

in this endeavor and faithful to their source in their understanding? It is clear here (and throughout their commentaries on *Tiruvāymoḻi*) that they are not attempting literary analyses of the text; they do not direct our attention to the motifs and themes of Tamil *caṅkam* poetry, and do not apply the canons of Tamil literary criticism to Nammāḻvār's songs. It is quite clear, moreover, that in introducing an overall "story line" of the saint's psychological experience of a present and absent God and in basing everything in Vedānta metaphysics they are saying much more than the text demands in terms of explication.

These points may be conceded without prejudice to the commentators' sensitivity to the text and the validity of their interpretations, because they have restricted themselves to a religious, theological interpretation of the *Tiruvāymoḻi*.[37] In a way and according to a process not yet well understood by modern scholarship, *Tiruvāymoḻi* became for the Vaiṣṇava community a revelatory, sacred Scripture, to be read and interpreted with the same care and expertise afforded earlier on to the Veda by the Mīmāṃsakas. The example of *Tiruvāymoḻi* 5.6 and the introductions to it suggests that the commentators treat the text skillfully and with a breadth of learning equal to the status they gave it.

Do they understand properly the condition of the girl/saint? Nammāḻvār's song is already a carefully crafted and intricate examination of possession and reactions to it, and it would be a mistake to think that the commentators had come across some "pure" anthropological data and intellectualized it. They look at an already complex and interpreted experience from a number of angles, placing next to it a series of well-known (and variously interpreted) cases of possession or God-consciousness. If ultimately the Viśiṣṭādvaita of Rāmānuja seems to be given priority and if too that system's understanding of the *ātman* within all reality seems to be of a different nature and certainly of a different "feel" from Nammāḻvār's song, it must nevertheless also be added that the reinterpretative influence reaches in both directions. As mentioned above, to say as the commentators do that this song is the premier instance of the doctrine of the all-pervading self infuses Viśiṣṭādvaita itself with an immediacy and feeling it did not evince before.

So too, it is perhaps the unique contribution of the commentators

that they reshape both the Tamil song and the Sanskrit Vedānta by merging with them the story line they understand to be documented in *Tiruvāymoli*; reading the ecstasy and the doctrine of *brahman/ātman* in the light of the moods of a saint in love with a God sometimes present, sometimes absent, relocates and redefines both the feelings and the metaphysics involved.

A proper understanding of the complex fashion in which the Śrīvaiṣṇava commentators rework *both* their Tamil and their Sanskrit sources should be a useful corrective to the tendency to criticize the commentators for an overly Sanskritized reading of Nammālvār. For example: recently both A. K. Ramanujan (in discussing a single verse of 5.6 and its treatment in the 14th-century *Ācāryahṛdayam*) and Friedhelm Hardy (speaking generally) have criticized the tendency of the commentaries to the ''esoteric,'' as opposed to ''public,'' and ''technical,'' as opposed to ''experiential,'' (Ramanujan) and the ''esoteric'' and ''scholastic'' (Hardy).[38] Examples such as the one I have developed should lead us to qualify their remarks. I doubt if the effort to harmonize the complex religious sentiments of *Tiruvāymoli* with those of Viśiṣṭādvaita was (or is) ''esoteric'' to the Vaiṣṇava community. Like other living religious communities Vaiṣṇaivism sought to appreciate its inspired texts against a background which would make them available to *all* community members; they sought to interpret the unique graces afforded to Nammālvār in a way which illuminated the graces available to the whole community. For the Vaiṣṇavas, Visiṣṭādvaita theology was one of the tools for this ''opening up'' of Nammālvār's experience, and the doctrine of *ātman-brahman/Viṣṇu* made Nammālvār's experience of God-consciousness more and not less a ''public'' experience, even if in a different mode than a popular, vernacular song does.

To conclude: a great deal of work obviously has to be done before we adequately understand either *Tiruvāymoli* and its commentaries, or in general the way in which commentaries function in the Indian context. Since we who study the religions and texts of India are scholars and intellectuals much like the commentators, careful attention to their work should enlighten us on the particular contours of our own structures and horizons of interpretation.

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[1] These dates are those traditionally given. For brief sketches of the lives and writings of the post-Rāmānuja Vaiṣṇava theologians, see Venkatachari. On the nature of their commentatorial interpretations, see also my "Unity in Enjoyment: An Exploration into Nammālvār's Tamil Veda and its Commentaries," *Sri Ramanuja Vani* 6 [1983] 34-61, and "Divine Word, Human word in Nammālvār," in *In Spirit and In Truth*, ed. I. Viyagappa, S. J. [Aikiya Alayam: Madras, 1983].

[2] It is not my intention thus to draw an overly sharp distinction between the Tamil and Sanskrit traditions. Not only it is generally an exaggeration to contrast drastically their ways of thinking, etc., but Nammālvār's own learned poetry in particular seems already aware of elements of Sanskrit religion and thought—as would be expected by the 6th-7th centuries C.E. For an interesting survey of this influence, see Agnihotram Ramanuja Tatachariar, *Ālvārkaḷum Vetaṅkaḷum* [Kumbakonam, 1973].

[3] Restricting myself to their introductions to 5.6, I thereby prescind from consideration of their detailed comments on each verse. I do this for reasons of economy of space; it is their practice in any case to state in the introduction to each song the major points to be made in the verse-by-verse comments.

[4] The placing of the words in the mother's mouth about her daughter follows one of the forms of the older Tamil *caṅkam* poetry [first centuries C.E.; see Hardy [124-7], wherein either a girl in love or her mother or friend or lover [sometimes] voices something of her inner feelings or, as the case may be, their feelings about her feelings. Throughout *Tiruvāymoḷi* and particularly in these "girl poems" Nammālvār is quite conscious of the norms and styles of older, classical Tamil. For more on the older poetry and its relation to Nammālvār's work, see A. K. Ramanujan [1967, 1981] and Hardy.

[5] Translations from the Sanskrit and Tamil are mine, except where noted.

[6] Traditional and modern scholars attribute these 11th verses to Nammālvār, even though he is mentioned in each of them as the composer of the preceding ten verses. The verses are intrinsic to *Tiruvāymoḷi* as it now stands, since they continue the *antāti* whereby each verses begins with the word ending the preceding one.

But I propose as a hypothesis that they represent the first redaction of the text, the organization of the songs into an ordered whole of 100. Even if composed by Nammālvār, they represent a second level of reflection *about* the songs.

[7] See the preceding note; if the *nigama* verses represent a redaction of *Tiruvāymoḷi*, it is possible that the songs were composed to be sung in the exact order found in *Tiruvāymoli*.

[8] As both the tradition and textual evidence make apparent, Piḷḷāṉ's commentary is the first, and Nañcīyar's significantly expanded one the second. While Periyavāccāṉpiḷḷai and Vaṭakkuttiruvītippiḷḷai were contemporaries, the latter's commentary, at least on *Tiruvāymoḷi*, is evidently an expansion on the former's. Given the generally cumulative nature of the commentaries, I will point to new elements in the commentary in which they first appear, and it may be assumed that they are repeated in the later works. In the particular instance dealt with in this essay, no significant omissions or deletions occur in the later commentaries.

[9] The five major commentaries on Book Five of *Tiruvāymoḷi* are available only in the old *Bhagavat Viṣayam* edition, ed. by C. Kṛṣṇamācārya Paṭippu [Tiruvallikeṇi: 1927], although a new edition began appearing in 1975 [Books Propagation Society: Srirangam] and has thus far reached Volume 3 or 4. The commentaries of Nañcīyar, Periyavāccāṉppiḷḷai and Vaṭakkuttiruvītippiḷḷai are also available in a five volume edition published in 1975-6 by Sri Annangaracariar

Swami Patippu [Tiruvallikkeṇi]. Thus far no translations of the commentaries have been made.

¹⁰ See his Introduction to *Tiruvāymoḷi*, pp. 64-5 in the new edition of the *Bhagavat Viṣayam* [with five commentaries], Volume I.

¹¹ Vaṭakkuttiruvītippiḷḷai elabores further on the girl's moods, pointing out another startling aspect of the contrast between the girl and her claims, and gives a deeper theological reason for Nammālvār's speaking through the "girl *persona*" here: "She was born in dependency, yet she speaks the words of him born in freedom; she who suffers the confines of womanhood speaks the words spoken by the best of men. In order to make definite the meaning of this, she speaks the words which the knower of all spoke."

¹² As translated by J. A. B. van Buitenen and Cornelia Dimmitt in *Classical Hindu Myths* [Temple, 1978], p. 125.

¹³ Glance [*nirīkṣaṇa*], gesture [*mudrā*] and knowledge [*jñāna*]-presumably primary notable characteristics of a great teacher. *Sādharmya* echoes, probably intentionally, Rāmānuja's commentary on the *Gītā*, where *sādharmya*, assuming the characteristics of the Lord, is a result of understanding the distinction of the self [*ātman*] from matter. As we will see below, Rāmānuja's explanation of "God-consciousness" is precisely this knowledge of the *ātman*: the more one knows the self, the more one knows God in and as the real self. See *Gītābhāṣya* on 6.30, and Lester [112-13].

¹⁴ I translate *vibhūti* as "glory," following Carman [140 ff.] His description [p. 144] of it as "the finite realm manifesting God's glory" is particularly apt in understanding the *Gītā* passage and Nammālvār, if the human "I" is seen as most prominently the place of manifestation.

¹⁵ Translations from the *Gītā* are in the R. Zaehner translation [Oxford, 1969].

¹⁶ In effect, the commentators ultimately base Nammālvār's declaration in Kṛṣṇa's; Nammālvār discovers within himself the absolute self which is Kṛṣṇa in a preeminent fashion. We shall see below how reference to Rāmānuja's Vedānta explicates the metaphysical basis of this claim.

¹⁷ Following Carman who points to the theory of two *vibhūtis* in the Pāñcarātra Āgamas and its possible influence on Rāmānuja and Śrīvaiṣṇava theology. See Carman [140ff.]

¹⁸ I.e., meditating so deeply as to reach the Lord within, the *prakārin*. He refers to the substance [*prakārin*]/mode [*prakāra*] relationship found in Rāmānuja's theology. See Carman [126.]

¹⁹ Adapted from H. H. Wilson's translation, *Rig Veda Sanhita*, New Delhi: Cosmo, 1972, Vol. 3.

²⁰ Slightly adapted from the translation of Swami Madhavananda, *The Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* [with the commentary of Śaṅkarācārya; Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1975].

²¹ Here, and elsewhere, it is important to remember that the introduction of an example does not mean the example is meant to replicate exactly the original; indeed, assuming the canons of Mīmāṃsā commentary are operative here, each example is meant to suggest a slightly different point.

²² Vaṭakkattiruvītippiḷḷai uses the term *śubhāśraya*, saying that experience of the unique form of the Lord is the "auspicious abode" of meditation. For an effort to sort out the strands of the text, see van Buitenen [1955].

²³ This reference, it may be noted, is remarkable on several grounds, especially these two: first, desire for God is claimed to be the path to *samādhi* and, second,

Nammālvār reveals his *samādhi* in this way *half-way* through the journey that constitutes *Tiruvāymoḷi*, far from the climax.

²⁴ For a discussion of *dhāraṇā* in the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* and Rāmānuja, see Lester [100-105.] His view is that for Rāmānuja "seeing the self" [*ātmadarśana*] is *samādhi*, and this seeing is based in a *dhāraṇā* focused on the Lord alone, the realization of one's own self as dependent on the Lord. van Buitenen [1955] also notes that the object of *dhāraṇā* is the Lord. In general, both Lester's and van Buitenen's observations here are rich resources toward our understanding of aspects of Rāmānuja pertinent to our commentators' own thinking.

²⁵ The words cited by Periyavāccāṇpiḷḷai are emphasized.

²⁶ Passing over the text we have noted above, from the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* 5.

²⁷ *so 'ntarād antaraṃ prāviśat. antarāt* can mean "from within," but is interpreted by Rāmānuja [below] to mean "from elsewhere," suggesting that the Self enters even Rudra "from elsewhere." But the text most naturally means that Rudra enters within, from within.

²⁸ It is interesting in itself that these texts show a definite textual instance of use of Rāmānuja's thought in interpreting Nammālvār; we thus discern another of the many slender threads binding together in continuity the Vaiṣṇava tradition from Nammālvār on. It is interesting too that they use him without mentioning him explicitly [they refer only to texts he has cited] since this silence invites a reversal of the ordinary speculation: instead of, "Why doesn't Rāmānuja cite the Ālvārs?" we ask, "Why don't the commentators [here at least] mention Rāmānuja?" Explicit reference to Rāmānuja is perhaps seen as unnecessary, possibly because Rāmānuja himself was understood to have already been *implicitly* explicating the Ālvār texts; or perhaps their debt to Rāmānuja is taken for granted.

²⁹ Rāmānuja on 1.1.25.

³⁰ Translations from the *Kauṣītaki Brāhmaṇa* are those included by Thibaut in his translation of the *Śrībhāṣya: The Vedānta-Sūtras with the commentary of Rāmānuja*, Sacred Books of the East, Vol. 48. Reprint ed., Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1976.

³¹ In technical terms, this reference of two terms a to a single, underlying referint is called *sāmānyādhikaraṇya*. Carman notes [p. 141] that in commenting on *Gītā* 10.20 [introducing 10.21] Rāmānuja links the notion of *sāmānyādhikaraṇya* with that of *vibhūti* in order to show that both the limited names of particular beings, and *brahman/Viṣṇu* as their "real" name are legitimately referred to such beings.

³² By the alternative interpretation; the first given under 1.1.30 seems repetitive of that given in 1.29.

³³ Translations from the *Śrībhāṣya* are Thibaut's.'

³⁴I use the numbering of paragraphs van Buitenen gives in his edition/translation: *Rāmānuja's Vedārthasaṃgraha* [Poona: Deccan College Monograph Series 16, 1956]. Translations from the *Vedārthasaṃgraha* are his.

³⁵ *svātmaprakāraprakāriṇam*: recall how Periyavāccāṇpiḷḷai introduces the *prakārin/prakāra* relationship.

³⁶ Another interesting text not cited by Rāmānuja or the later commentators is the passage near the end of the *Vivekacūḍāmaṇi* [verses 487ff. in the text/translation of Swami Madhavananda [Calcutta: Advaita Ashram, 1982] where the pupil, brought to consciousness of *brahman* by his teacher, makes a series of "I" statements very similar to those we have seen. Traditionally attributed to Śaṅkara, the work is generally thought to be from a later century although [to may knowledge] no one has attempted to date it precisely. It may be later than Rāmānuja's time, but is certainly part of the "competition" for the Vaiṣṇava

commentators. Certain other aspects of the text—such as the exaltation of the teacher and the opening declaration that a human birth, desire for liberation, etc. are difficult to obtain—are intriguingly, similar to statements found in texts such as Nañcīyar's introduction to *Tiruvāymoḷi.*

[37] To distinguish this from literary interpretation without erroneously suggesting that the literary and religious aspects of poetry are separable.

[38] Ramanujan [1981: 155, n. 64]; Hardy [558].

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TRANSFORMATION OF RELIGIOUS SYMBOL IN INDIAN BUDDHISM: REFLECTIONS ON METHOD FROM A READING OF MUS'S *BARABUḌUR*

Victoria Urubshurow

A la question s'il est ou n'est pas, le Buddha répondra obscurément: Agissez bien. C'est une réponse, et elle s'éclaire aussitôt qu'on la replace dans son contexte historique.[1]

One half century ago Paul Mus engaged in an extensive investigation of the Javanese Buddhist monument Barabuḍur. In 1935 his labors bore fruit in a work of two volumes, the first of which outlines the history of Buddhism in India from what—some fifty years later—still may be considered an innovative perspective. Although much literature on Buddhism has been generated since, his work is nonetheless revolutionary.[2] Mus wrote the history to give Barabuḍur an intelligible context. However, there is no doubt that his study of the monument, conversely, illumined his understanding of Indian religious history. From Mus's work on both archeology and history, an interdisciplinary method emerged that cast light on the morphology and development of religious symbols.[3]

It is no accident that Mus's pivotal insight regarding the history of Indian Buddhism involves the dynamic interaction between ritual and art. The monument is a microcosm of the Buddhist universe and embodies the corpus of Buddha's teachings for those who use it as a ritual object or religious symbol.[4] To the practicing faithful Barabuḍur is

> like a prayer attended by the rosary of reliefs and ornaments. It rises to heaven towards the acquisition of Buddhaship, the absolute deliverance from the cycle of perpetual reincarnation.[5]

Barabuḍur is a complex symbol and ritual object, and Mus treats it as such.[6] Moreover, as he deciphers the monument by restoring its practical context, so Mus deciphers Buddhist history by considering its vital connection with the cultural disposition of a people.

Whereas Mus's study of the Barabuḍur monument has been appropriated and applauded by scholars of Buddhist art, his insights on the development of Indian religious history have received little recognition. One reason for the lack of widespread attention to Mus's work is the fact that Barabuḍur was out of print for many years, and is yet available only in French. Furthermore, even a careful reading of his dense and massive tome does not readily yield a systematic understanding. Finally, though scholars of Buddhist art were easily drawn to the work due to its expressed subject matter (i.e. Barabuḍur), Mus's historical account was overlooked as a substantial contribution in its own right—perhaps, in part, because his three-hundred page discussion goes by the diminutive heading ''Avant-Propos''!

In the 1970's, interest in Barabuḍur and Mus's interpretation of it was revived.[7] Yet, despite the attention given to Barabuḍur by Buddhologists, Mus's contribution has not been appreciated sufficiently by historians of religions more generally; and though the monument merits still further study, it is Mus's approach to the subject that has broader hermeneutic relevance. Therefore, Mus's *method* is the focus of this discussion, rather than his interpretation of Barabuḍur or Buddhist history, *per se.* To disclose the relevance *Barabuḍur* for historians of religions, Mus's major insights on the transformation of religious symbols are culled, and a vocabulary is developed based on themes raised in his study. The principles of cultural dynamics, derived from Mus's work, are illustrated by his own examples.

General Reflections on the Method of Mus

Mus states that one must make a ''simple but radical change in point of view'' when studying the history of Buddhism.[8] In his opinion, scholars who see a ''problem'' posed by Buddha Śākyamuni's answer to metaphysical questions create their own difficulties by trying to solve it philosophically.[9] Their impasse stems from a wish to ''construct for themselves an intelligible picture of Buddhist thought before having posed the conditions of its intelligibility.'' (135)

The seeming incongruity between metaphysical questions put to the Buddha and his practical response is resolved when taken from a purely philosophical context and placed into historical perspective. Mus argues that Buddha did "answer" the question of whether or not a saint exists after death by replying, "Act well."[10] Buddha's practical answer to a metaphysical question makes sense as a moment in the thought of India.

Mus insists that Buddhism developed as a dynamic part of an integrated world view, which he calls Total India. To understand this axial view, one must take account of concrete ethnographic realities (254), and not exaggerate the importance of doctrinal analysis. (71) Buddhism is a problem of history, not of philosophy (135); and problems posed by Buddha's teachings are soluble not by pure logic, but by the logic of history. (192) Mus faults interpretations that force contemporary philosophical notions onto an ancient mentality: "*L'Inde l'a produit, l'Inde l'expliquera.*"[11] In Mus's judgment "the Buddhism of Buddha was merely a logical moment in the evolution of Indian thought." (128)[12]

To render Buddhist thought intelligible, one must take account of the *Brāhmaṇas*, which exhibit a cultural pattern "logically" consistent with all subsequent religious developments in India. Total India, first embodied in the *Brāhmaṇas*, and epitomized in the fire sacrifice (*agnicayana*), is characterized by the primacy of practice, and is "profoundly impregnated with magical notions."[13] The laws of magic are to a traditional Indian what the laws of science are to the "modern spirit." (234) In the course of India's religious history the "need of direct contact, practice, (and) magic" has surfaced time and time again. The magical paradigm is the "*principe régulateur*" of the Indian traditions: it governs the fire sacrifice, explains devotional Hinduism (*bhakti*), is the spirit of ascetic discipline (*yoga*), and infuses Buddhism. (178)

Buddhism, Jainism, and Hinduism exist in a lateral relationship, and are subordinate to Total India. Born of the pragmatic Brahmanical tradition, Indian religions variously employ two principles that are most completely expressed in the fire sacrifice: projection and rupture of plane.[14] The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* teachs that, during the sacrifice, Agni—who is the sacred fire and the son of Prajāpati, Lord of Creatures—both *inherits of* his father and *inherits*

his father. For example, the text declares [*kāṇḍa* 6, *adhyāya* 1, *brāhmaṇa* 2, verse 26]:

> Now that father (Prajāpati) is (also) the son: inasmuch as he created Agni, thereby he is Agni's father; and inasmuch as Agni restored him, thereby Agni is his (Prajāpati's) father.[15]

Agni inherits Prajāpati, yet Prajāpati does not cease to exist. Mus calls this paradoxical relationship between father and son the mystical heritage. This inheritance is accomplished through the projection of Agni (as the fire's smoke) beyond this world to the transcendent place of his father. At a critical moment the distinction between phenomenal and transcendent worlds is shattered. Due to a rupture of plane, what is not whole becomes whole.

Mus recognizes that the principles of projection and rupture of plane operate not only in the fire sacrifice, but also in every Indian religion—as the dynamic basis of Total India. Mus observes that not every religious symbol reflects these principles of the magical *modus operandi* equally well. Yet, he demonstrates that the world view of Total India is more tenacious and pervasive than an ordinary reading of history would suggest.

While Mus alludes to the basic coherence of the Indian religions, he focuses on Buddhism.[16] He detects a repetition of the symbolic structure of mystical heritage in the silence of Buddha Śākyamuni, and in the dialectic of Nāgārjuna. All three symbols involve a projection and a rupture of plane in which the ordinary (immanent) is paradoxically related to the extraordinary (transcendent): Agni (immanent) becomes Prajāpati (transcendent), but Prajāpari does not cease to exist. Buddha is silent with regard to metaphysical (transcendent) issues, but prescribes a concrete practice (immanent) that leads to *nirvāṇa* (transcendent). Nāgārjuna uses rational logic (immanent), and ruptures the plane of ordinary categories to point out the emptiness (transcendent) of all phenomena.

The symbol of mystical heritage is embedded in, and dependent upon, the pragmatic orientation of the fire sacrifice as a whole. Likewise, new symbols that emerge from the mystical heritage are intimately linked to a ritual context. Buddha's silence was practical advice for everyday life, and Nāgārjuna's dialectic was practical instruction on the use of logic. The silence and the dialectic become meaningful and effective only when Buddha's advice is taken, and Nāgārjuna's logic is employed.

The Cultural Forms: Art, Ritual, Doctrine

Mus claims that scholars of Indian religions have generally misunderstood Buddha's silence, and other matters, due to an excessive use of philosophical hermeneutics. As a corrective measure, he stresses the cardinal importance of art and ritual in the development of religious traditions. Mus treats three forms of cultural expression in his discussion of India's religious symbols: art, ritual and doctrine. Though he does not systematically analyze the dynamic relations among what we call the "cultural forms," Mus's historical presentation amply demonstrates their dynamic interaction.

Mus claims that the "three baskets" (*tripiṭaka*) of the official Buddhist canon should admit art as a "fourth basket." Art exerted a powerful influence on the development of Buddhism, comparable to that of the discourses, commentaries, and monastic rule (*sūtras*, *śāstras*, and *vinaya*). In these four baskets "identical notions are expressed in one way or another with the aid of formulas where only the material differs." (75) Art has immediacy; it reflects more easily than philosophy the incipient disposition of a people, because it is very malleable. Fluctuations in popular sentiment are seized more readily by artists than philosophers: sculptors take an advance over thinkers. Art materializes the vision of a people, fashioning itself according to the "demands" of a religious community. Mus calls the artist a "magician and priest" who is even closer to the community than the monk, due to the immediacy and accessibility of artistic communication. (70)

The symbolic or magical effectiveness of art is realized in conjunction with ritual activity. Ritual, like art, has a malleable quality, and together they infuse cultural forms with vitality. In fact, there is a synergistic connection among all the cultural forms: art and ritual readily anticipate and engender theoretical formulations; they also are defined and delimited by doctrinal contexts. Art, ritual, and dogma mutually interact, and tend to establish equilibrium in the face of tensions brought on through historical circumstance. On occasion, when artistic and ritual developments coming "from below" are found to grossly contradict official dogma, an internal crisis may ensue. The crisis results in schism if the cultural forms cannot be reconciled.[17]

Mus uncovers two developmental properties of art objects, ritual practices, and philosophical ideas: (1) individual symbols undergo various types of permutation, and (2) symbols become aligned into sets characterized by redundancy. As the three cultural forms interact, they produce religiously meaningful symbols, as well as symbol sets. In turn, we shall discuss the morphology of individual symbols, and the redundancy of symbol sets.

Morphology of Religious Symbols: A Typology

Four types of permutation undergone by cultural forms can be gleaned from Mus's historical examples. Though he does not classify them, we do so as follows: (1) Inversion, (2) Complement, (3) Elaboration, and (4) Ascription. The first two permutations involve a cultural form whose content gradually becomes rich enough to instigate fission from within—resulting in a binary split into either mutually exclusive inversions, or complementary aspects. The second two permutations occur predominately due to swifter external pressures that bring about a fusion of select elements, largely from culturally alien sources—resulting in an elaboration of the original, or a fundamental revision by ascription. Images, rituals, and ideas have structural limitations that imply a specific range of expression. Formal permutations result from internal substantive pressures (such as paradox, contradiction, or imbalance), in conjunction with external historical pressures (such as revaluation, elimination, or imposition).

Type 1. Inversion

A cultural form becomes inverted when it splits into two contradictory aspects. The development of the Brahmanical symbol of mystical heritage exemplifies this type of permutation. The *Brāhmaṇas* harbor an incipient contradiction in the belief that, through the fire sacrifice, Prajāpati becomes both the same and different from his son Agni. He becomes mortal and immortal; he becomes the altar, but transcends the altar. Whereas the Brahmanical priests were not inclined to specify the ontological status of Agni and Prajāpati, the ontological problem of the nature of being gradually called for a solution.

In the post-Brahmanical period, the problem of being was resolved in two opposing, yet symmetrical interpretations. The paradoxical relationship between the immanent and transcendent, the mortal and immortal, was unpacked in the *Upaniṣads*, and in the early Buddhist scriptures. The Upanisadic seers solved the problem of being by defining the nature of the self (*ātman*) and its relation to the transcendent (*brahman*), while the early Buddhists settled on the notion of no-self (*anātman*) in relation to an apparent self (*ātman*). The fact that the *Upaniṣads* and early Buddhist scriptures have the ''same philosophical vocabulary, using a nearly uniform cosmology transposed onto two converging architectures'' reveals their community of origin. (173)

The division of the Brahmanical notion of mystical heritage into mirror images discloses an implicit contradiction in the original formulation of the relationship between Agni and Prajāpati. Neither the Buddhist no-self alone, nor the Upanisadic self alone, is fully concordant with the Brahmanical world view; but both are embedded in it—and together they reconstitute it. The Buddhist theory of no-self is not a ''moment of pure thought,'' but a ''moment of the thought of India.'' (184) The Upanisadic theory of self is its logical inversion which, according to the logic of history, was bound to precipitate from a paradox no longer able to embody its contradition in the light of a new speculative trend.

Type 2. Complement

While inversions derive from the dogmatic paradox embedded in the notion of mystical heritage, complements derive from the ritual construction of the fire altar, and the sacrifice. The newly emergent symbols are not logical inversions of each other (as self is the inverse of no-self), but nonetheless they express divergent options.

The fire sacrifice embodies what Mus calls an act, in the precise construction of the altar, offering of the vase, lighting of the fire, and so on. It also embodies what Mus calls an ideal, in the evoked presence of the transcendent Prajāpati. In the act, a vase is broken. According to magical laws, when the sacrificial vase breaks on earth, it becomes whole in the beyond.[18] In the act, Agni is projected beyond the mortal world, a rupture of plane occurs, and the

transcendent ideal becomes mystically present. The pieces of the vase, as well as the whole vase, paradoxically co-exist in the sacrifice. Thus, both the act of breaking and the ideal of the whole are valorized in the Brahmanical context.

As the symbol of mystical heritage split under the pressure imposed by Upanisadic and Buddhist sages thinking about the nature of being, so the ritual sacrifice underwent fission when new questions about how to tread the path of liberation arose. When the symbol of sacrifice divided, the ideal was assimilated into the *Upaniṣads*, and the act was assimilated into Buddhism. The *Upaniṣads* took the whole vase, by adopting the preeminent value of merging *ātman* with *brahman* in transcendence. The act was relatively devalued, with a soteriology based on realization of the ideal thorough the path of knowledge (*jñāna-mārga*). On the other hand, Buddhism kept just the pieces of the Brahmanical vase, highlighting the act while keeping silent about the transcendent ideal. (174) Buddhist salvation was achieved through proper morality on the path of acts (*karma-mārga*). (129)

When implications of the ideal and act embedded in the Brahmanical sacrifice were spelled out, the complementary cultural options emerged. Both represent viable spiritual paths which grew out of the *Brāhmaṇas*, yet neither reflects precisely the Brahmanical vision. For Mus, the Upanisadic emphasis on salvation through knowledge was a deviation from the magical paradigm of Total India, because it submerged the pragmatic orientation. Furthermore, though the primacy of practice was sustained in early Buddhism, technical action was revalorized into moral action. Thus, neither the path of action, nor the path of knowledge completely reflected what went before; yet, in the context of Total India, the *Upaniṣads* and Buddhism together reflect a historically logical development of Brahmanism.

Type 3. Elaboration

At a critical point of maturation, a value-laden primary symbol precipitates new symbols. As we have seen, an overloaded symbol may split into mutually exclusive, inverted values (Type 1), or it may develop divergent but complementary alternatives (Type 2).

However, not all symbols are created through fission. An original symbol that fuses with new cultural material many react in two ways depending upon its cultural vitality: either the original and new symbols coexist, or the original is replaced by the new. In the first case, the coexistent new symbol is an elaborated version of the still vital original (Type 3). In the second case, a viable replacement for the value-depleted original symbol is generated (Type 4).

The process of elaboration is exemplified in the evolution of the symbol of the Buddha bodies. As Buddhism evolved into the Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna branches[19], the historical Buddha Śākyamuni's body was variously interpreted. The Hinayanists recognized two Buddha bodies: the physical form body (*rūpakāya*) of the historical Buddha and the body of Śākyamuni's teachings (*dharmakāya*) left in his stead. A third Buddha body, professed only by Mahayanists, evolved through elaboration of the *dharmakāya*, which called for new definition, in response to the implicative pressure of innovative artistic and ritual developments. With a new emphasis on iconic representations of many Buddhas and Buddhas-to-be (*bodhisattvas*), the notion of a body of communion (*saṃbhogakāya*) was elaborated. (264) This third Buddha body symbolized the subtle forms of enlightened beings who appeared in visions on the basis of meditation on artistic icons.[20]

Mus claims that the early Buddhists, in the absence of iconic representations, did not ritually contemplate subtle forms of enlightened beings. Moreover, at the time of the great Buddhist schism, the Hinayanists reacted against innovative contemplative rituals based on icons. For these conservative Buddhists neither the form body nor the body of teachings was to be associated with a subtle body of communion. Only with the development of innovative ritual and art forms did the notion of a body of communion in contemplation became historically logical. (261) The symbol of the body of teachings, according to Mus, was furnished with attributes that reflected the contemplative experience of joining in communion with numerous Buddhas and *bodhisattvas*. (263) Thus, a radical elaboration of the early symbol of Buddha Śākyamuni's body of teachings evolved under the impact of art and ritual. Doctrinal interpretations followed suit once Buddhists recognized the practical implications of using multifarious images.

Type 4. Ascription

A fourth type of permutation occurs when a primary symbol becomes severely devalued, and a secondary symbol is produced by ascribing new values to the original. New meanings, with fresh cultural relevance, are assimilated readily by the devalued symbol because it has little vitality. Most of the symbolic value of the newly evolved image, idea, or action derives from sources alien to the primary symbol. Ascription of relevant new values to a skeletal structure implies a radically discontinuous relationship between the old and new symbols.

An example of permutation by ascription is the Indian adaptation of the occidental sundial. The gnomon was introduced, already charged with meaning, from the perspective of a highly scientific world view. But that "meaning" had little relevance to Total India, and was adopted into the Indian context as another Mount Meru. A new set of values consistent with the Brahmanical magical paradigm was ascribed to the occidental gnomon, and only the bare structure of the originally scientific instrument was retained. The tenacious and influential collective disposition of Total India prevailed as a novel cultural object was revalorized almost completely.

In the rationalistic atmosphere of the occident, the sundial was instrumental in developing mathematical speculations of latitude and longitude in a quantified universe. Once assimilated into the highly pragmatic Indian world, however, the gnomon was fused onto extant symbols (serving as a variation of the cosmic mountain), and was used for religious purposes. In Total India, the space which the gnomon defined was not the space of a periodic sun, and the numbers were not "concrete numbers" laden with quantitative value. Instead, the space referred to a sacred microcosm, and the numbers became ciphers with mystical significance. (232) Rich symbolic values were ascribed to the gnomon; but they were values meaningful in a world different from the occidental.

The Redundancy of Symbols

A religious tradition, as part of a greater culture, supports many symbols—and these symbols change both individually and in rela-

tion to each other. On one hand, individual symbols tend to split or fuse. On the other hand, even once they are individually altered in critical situations, symbols tend to form self-consistent and harmonious sets. These sets, in turn, cohere within a larger cultural system.

Though Mus does not explicitly distinguish between individual symbols, sets, and systems, we may interpret his observations in such terms. Total India is a cultural system that holds together, with the magnetic force of its world view, various sets of symbols. As a subset of Total India, the *Brāhmaṇas* harbored a set of symbols whose structures (individually and collectively) redounded through the rest of the cultural system.

The silence of Buddha Śākyamuni, in response to metaphysical "inexpressibles," is perhaps the richest symbol in the Buddhist tradition. From it emerged several symbols that were consistent with the magical paradigm. Mus examines Buddha's silence as it redounded through Indian history, and traces the mutual impact of art, ritual, and doctrine in both Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna Buddhism.

Interaction among cultural forms is intensified, from time to time, by the onset of key events that saturate old symbols and trigger the precipitation of new ones. Two key events that had tremendous impact on the evolution of Indian Buddhist symbols are identified by Mus: (1) the figure of Buddha Śākyamuni himself, and (2) the introduction of the *"ciseau hellénistic"*—the chisel of Hellenistic sculpture from Gandhāra. Each event played a major role in developing a new orientation in art work, religious ritual, and doctrine.

Mus calls Buddha a *"chef d'école"* (196)—a sort of genius who brought to fruition a number of new symbolic expressions dormant in sixth century B.C.E. India. Three important notions emerged from Buddha's vital participation in the culture: a moral basis for action (*karma*), analysis of the person into constituent elements (*dharmas*) transmigrating on the basis of a mental continuum, and a practical soteriological path not dependent on the the dogma of eternity and transcendence. (129) Śākyamuni was in concert with his time. Yet, he had a mastery of the times sufficient to radically shift the course of events, on a ground well-prepared for

such change. Mus suggests that only a fine line distinguished Buddha as a "simple name" in a history that, almost of itself, produced radical cultural change, from Buddha as an ingenious, enlightened being.[21] Perhaps all history needed at the time of Śākyamuni was someone who, after all, just would keep silent.

Because Śākyamuni expressed silence on metaphysical matters, and offered instead a practical response to ontological problems, symbols were generated which initiated a new path in the history of religions. The silence of Buddha was expressed eventually by the concept of *nirvāṇa*, the image of the empty throne, and the cult of the *stūpa*. These symbols are structurally equivalent, and convey through different mediums the same message: Śākyamuni passed out of earthly existence into a condition that could not be defined according to any logical conception—as being either eternal or not eternal, neither eternal nor not eternal, and so on. *Nirvāṇa*, the empty throne, and the *stūpa* made way for yet another burst of symbolic expression. Incited by the influx of sculpted images from the occident some four centuries after Buddha's passing away (*parinirvāṇa*), the symbol of his silence took sculpted form.

Mus claims that the proliferation of Buddha images, modeled after Gandharan art, led to a new Buddhist ideal, new religious rituals, a new interpretation of the nature of the historical Buddha, and new expressions of the *anātman* theory. A critical contradiction between the old and the emergent symbol systems became apparent, and forced the Hīnayāna/Mahāyāna schism. The symbols within each Buddhist group, according to the logic of history, tended towards a relationship of internal consistency that was realized through the dynamic adjustment of art, ritual, and dogma.

Prior to the introduction of sculpture from the Hellenistic world, the Buddhist tradition had not known sculpted representations of Buddha Śākyamuni. It had known that Buddha through footprints, wheels of *dharma*, empty thrones, and relics encased in *stūpas*. Mus claims that before the influx of Gandharan sculpture, Buddhism "could not have conceived the project of sculpting figures of the Buddha." (44) However, once sculptural representation became widespread, the Buddhist tradition as a whole was irrevocably altered.

With the multiplication of Buddha images came the suggestion

of potentially innumerable Buddhas and *bodhisattvas*. The historical
Śākyamuni eventually was considered, among many Buddhas, the
one who most recently enjoyed an earthly career. Other Buddhas
maintained celestial abodes, and *bodhisattvas* instructed capable
disciples during contemplation. The new Buddhist art was charged
with ritual—and together they shook the foundations of doctrine.[22]

Once Buddhist iconography became popular, a profound sense
of the accessibility of numerous enlightened beings developed.
Their presence was conceived as personal, and not merely implied
by a footprint, wheel, or empty throne. Moreover, the cult of relics
was no longer the sole focus of veneration: the *stūpa* was elaborated
into a *maṇḍala* into which living "relics" could be invited in the
form of the Buddha's subtle body of communion. The wheel of
dharma had been turned once again: *nirvāṇa* gave way to Bud-
dhahood; *anātman* gave way to emptiness (*śūnyatā*); the *arhant* gave
way to the *bodhisattva*—and early Buddhism gave way to a schism.

The Buddhist tradition was bound, by the logic of history, to
divide in the face of multifarious art objects, divergent religious
practices, and doctrinal contradictions. Indeed, one faction pulled
back, and the other admitted innovation. After this schism, the
cultural forms within Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna Buddhism estab-
lished equilibrium, as relevant symbols realigned into two self-
consistent sets.

In the Hīnayāna branch, the symbol of silence was expressed
through the path of the *arhant* whose goal was *nirvāṇa*. Śākyamuni
was the central figure who left relics and *dharma* in his stead. The
stūpa preserved Buddha's silence in its peak where *nirvāṇa* was
indicated symbolically as the culmination of a step-wise path. (100)
The Buddhism of the *stūpa* was a Buddhism of *nirvāṇa*, as the reli-
quary "materialized the etymology." (295) The empty throne told
of Śākyamuni's passing from this world, and the wheel of *dharma*
pointed out how to act in this world.

The primary symbol of Buddha Śākyamuni's silence evolved, in
the Mahāyāna branch, according to a new and coherent set of
expressions. *Bodhisattvas* imparted teachings, in the flesh or through
contemplative visions, that were recognized as legitimate and
necessary Buddhist *dharma*. The doctrine of emptiness, proclaimed
in the Perfection of Wisdom literature and developed through

Nāgārjuna's dialectic, further expressed Śākyamuni's silence. Wisdom realizing emptiness, combined with great compassion, defined Buddhahood—a goal superseding the peace of *nirvāṇa*. The *bodhisattva* path became viable due to the real possibility of helping all living beings by various skillful means (*upāya*) developed through *tantric yoga* practice.

For the Mahayanist, the Buddha's silence was expressed through the footprint, now filled; the throne, now occupied; the *stūpa*, now materialized in contemplative space; and the wheel of *dharma*, now turned again. The Perfection of Wisdom teachings on emptiness, and the doctrine of conventional (*saṃvṛtti*) and ultimate (*paramārtha*) truths, articulated by Nāgārjuna, fully justified the use of Buddha images and *tantric maṇḍalas*: they conventionally exist, but are truly empty of inherent existence.

Mus notes that the Mādhyamika dialectic of Nāgārjuna evidences a vital reemergence of Total India's magical *modus operandi*. It is neither a metaphysics, nor an abstract epistemology. The negative dialectic of Nāgārjuna is a "*propedeutique de la foi.*" (203) Logic is exercised until it meets its own demise, through the refutation of one point of view after another with no alternative posed. Nāgārjuna evokes a rupture of plane on the level of rationality. To accomplish the rupture, the dialectic must be practiced. Silence is the result. Nāgārjuna's emptiness is equivalent to Śākyamuni's silence, and to Agni's curious relationship with his father, about which nothing much was said—until the time of the *Upaniṣads*.

Conclusion

In this essay various cultural forms, interacting in the history of Indian religions, were discussed based on examples furnished by Paul Mus in *Barabuḍur: esquisse d'une histoire du bouddhisme fondée sur la critique archéologique des textes*. With respect strictly to factual content, Mus revealed nothing astoundingly new. However, the manner in which he juxtaposed and interpreted the facts engendered an original, coherent, and fascinating picture of Indian Buddhism. Mus not only assembled the facts, he brought them to life. By knitting together Buddhist art, ritual, and doctrine according to the logic of history, Mus disclosed the dynamic relationship among them in the ongoing creation of culture.

Mus, "with a mind whose spontaneous combustion was due to an accumulation of both thought and experience,"[23] rarely discussed method explicitly. Nevertheless, he abundantly demonstrated that the artistic and ritual dimensions of culture cannot be ignored—if one is to comprehend the coherence of a world view, and the vitality of its symbol system. Indeed, by considering Total India's primacy of practice, Mus managed to decipher Buddha Śākyamuni's enigmatic and philosophically opaque answer to the metaphysical "inexpressibles": "Act well."

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[1] Paul Mus, *Barabuḍur: esquisse d'une histoire du bouddhisme fondée sur la critique archéologique des textes*, 2 vols., with a Preface by George Coedès (Hanoi: Imprimerie d'extrême-orient, 1935; reprint ed., New York: Arno Press, 1978), Avant-Propos, p. 220. All direct references to *Barabuḍur* are followed, in parentheses, by the relevant page number of the Avant-Propos: Les sources indiennes du Bouddhisme. An occasional quote from the French text appears in these notes, to show the richness of Mus's thought.

[2] Barabuḍur is a complex piece of architecture that has been the subject of much study. J. G. de Casparis alludes to the "numerous merits of the great and beautiful work of Paul Mus," and credits him with simplifying the complex categorical problems, associated with its interpretation, by recognizing the "pronounced esoterism of its architecture, which does not betray its secrets to an 'outsider' or to someone in a different part of the structure." John G. de Casparis, "The Dual Nature of Barabuḍur," *Barabuḍur: History and Significance of a Buddhist Monument*, ed. Luis Gomez and Hiram W. Woodward, Jr., Berkeley Buddhist Studies Series 2 (Berkeley, CA: Asian Humanities Press, 1981), pp. 51, 52.

[3] This essay does not develop a theory of symbol. The term is used provisionally with reference to any cultural form that functions in a ritual context, and effects a rupture of plane that bridges the ordinary and extraordinary dimensions of existence, or perception. Whereas our use of the term "symbol" is quite general, it is used in a manner consistent with Mus's understanding—as reflected in this quote:

> "Le bouddhisme marque un renouveau de la pratique symbolique. L'objet qu'il se donnait est cependant par lui-même une vaste analyse intellectuelle, ne laissant subsister des choses que les éléments et une force qui les lie, indistincte de leur nature, qu'elle constitue. Cet objet, en son ensemble, c'est le tableau de la transmigration, c'est le *saṃsāra*. Mais en même temps l'objet a une valeur que, faute d'un meilleur mot, nous nommerons symbolique— ou projective." (199)

For Mus, symbolic is equivalent to projective or magical. Symbols provide the basis for projection and rupture of plane, and function as part of a coherent set,

within a larger cultural system. They interact to reinforce cultural values in the domains of art, ritual, and dogma.

[4] W. F. Stutterheim advances an interpretation of Barabuḍur that "implies that all the reliefs of the monument were charged with a religious content which made them suitable objects of meditation." J. Fontein considers Stutterheim's thesis extreme, as it seems to find virtually every relief meaningful. Yet, he recognizes the general viability of this ritual interpretation of Barabuḍur's narrative scenes. Jan Fontein, *The Pilgrimage of Sudhana: A Study of the "Gaṇḍavyūha" Illustrations in China, Japan and Java* (The Hague: Mouton and Co., 1967), p. 154. See also Willem Frederik Stutterheim, "Chaṇḍi Barabuḍur: Name, Form, and Meaning," trans., with notes by F. D. K. Bosch, in *Studies in Indonesian Archaeology*, by W. F. Stutterheim, Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde, Translation series, no. 1 (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1956), pp. 3-90.

[5] Yazir Marzuki and Fred D. Awvy, *Namo Buddhaya* (Amsterdam: Indonesia Overseas Bank, 1974), p. 4.

In the present day, Barabuḍur still retains its symbolic, magical character:
"In mystical circles it is prophesied that Indonesia shall again attain great prosperity provided Borobuḍur be restored to its original state. May modern science and techniques realise this recovery and may the whispered prediction of this mystical world come true."

Ibid., p. 101.

[6] "It has been said, by Bosch, Mus and others, that Borobuḍur provokes discord. The meaning of the monument has been the subject of more than 500 studies so far and some of them contain remarkably polemical opinions. However, all the authors recognize that the monument is the expression of a symbol and even the architects who have somewhat circumspectly dealt with the subject have never doubted this fundamental aspect of the monument, with at least a part of its purpose being to act as an exhibition gallery."

Jacques Dumarçay, *Borobuḍur*, ed. and trans. Michael Smithies (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1978), p. 38. See also F. D. K. Bosch, *The Golden Germ: An Introduction to Indian Symbols*, Indo-Iranian Monograph, vol. 2 ('s-Gravenhage: Mouton, 1960); "De beteekenis der reliefs van de derde en vierde gaanderij van Baraboeḍoer," in *Oudheidkundig Verslag, derde en vierde kwartaal* (1929) [Weltevreden (1930)], pp. 179-243; "De Bhadracarī afgebeeld op den hoofdmuur der vierde gaanderij van den Baraboeḍoer," in *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde van Nederlandsch-Indië*, vol. 97 (1938), no. 2, pp. 241-293.

Barabuḍur is a veritable encyclopedia in stone with 1460 narrative reliefs, depicting scenes from Buddhist literature, and decorative reliefs. R. Soekmono, *Chaṇḍi Borobuḍur: A Monument of Mankind* (Assen and Amsterdam: Van Gorcum; Paris: Unesco Press, 1976), p. 20. See also N. J. Krom, *Barabuḍur: Archaeological Description*, 2 vols. (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1927; reprint ed., New York: AMS Press, 1983.); August Johan Bernet Kempers, *Ageless Borobuḍur*, Wassenaar: Servire, 1976.

[7] In the mid-1970s Unesco sponsored an archeological project to restore Barabuḍur, and funded several publications on it. See, for example, Erika J. Hofinger, *Untersuchungen zu den Pflanzen—und Tierdarstellungen auf den Purgatorienreliefs des Caṇḍi Barabuḍur* (München: Tuduv-Verlagsgesellschaft, 1984). In 1974, the "International Conference on Borobuḍur" was held at the University of Michigan; it bore fruit in an excellent volume published in 1981 (Gomez and

Woodward, eds. *Barabuḍur*). Furthermore, a reprint edition of Mus's *Barabuḍur* was issued in 1978.

    [8] "Pour tirer l'histoire du bouddhisme hors de l'impasse où les méthodes de recherche appliquées jusqu'à present l'ont engagée, il suffirait donc d'un changement simple mais radical de point de vue: c'est dans l'Inde pré-bouddhique, c'est dans les *Brāhmaṇa* ... c'est-à-dire sur place, que nous pour-suivrons jusqu'au détail les antécédents rituels, architecturaux, magiques et religieux du bouddhisme, et la raison nécessaire de ses principales mutations, en laissant surtout aux influences extérieures le mérite d'avoir fourni une occasion ou un adjuvant à celles-ci." (25)

  [9] In *Barabuḍur*, Mus refers in passing to a number of scholars with whom he agrees or differs on various points. These include Stcherbatsky, de La Vallée Poussin, Granet, Mauss, Foucher, Chavannes, Oldenberg, Stutterheim, Senart, and others. He does not develop an extended polemic with reference to particular scholars on the issue of philosophizing, however.

  [10] Scholars face (or create!) the "problem" of how to interpret Śākyamuni's "silence"—his celebrated refusal to "answer" four sets of questions: (1) Is the world eternal, or not, or both, or neither? (2) Is the world finite (in space), or infinite, or both, or neither? (3) Does the Tathāgata exist after death, or not, or both or neither? (4) Is the soul identical with the body, or different from it? Bud-dha deemed answers to these queries *avyākṛta:* inexpressible. He declared that religious life does not depend upon dogmatic answers to such questions, but upon a path leading to the cessation of misery. Buddha likened those in search of dogmatic answers to a man, shot with a poisoned arrow, who would rather know who shot the arrow than have it extracted. See the *Majjhima Nikāya* 63 for the *locus classicus* of this parable, and *Barabuḍur*, p. 256, for Mus's discussion of it. For a list of canonical references pertaining to the *avyākṛta*, and a discussion of their import see T. R. V. Murti, *The Central Philosophy of Buddhism: A Study of the Mādhyamika System* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1960), pp. 36-54. Eliade notes the function of Buddha's silence:

    "To try to find solutions to these problems [of the date of Creation, etc.] is not only a futile effort but infantile. These problems have been badly stated, and according to an old Brahman custom invoked by Buddha himself on a number of occasions, the reply to a badly stated problem is silence."

Mircea Eliade, *Patañjali and Yoga*, trans. Charles Lam Markmann (New York: Schocken Books, 1975), p. 30.

  [11] "Trop de préjugés métaphysiques ont obscurci l'indianisme. ... [L]'heure est venue de remplacer ces matériaux douteux par la connaissance précise de la mentalité ancienne, telle que les textes et les monuments nous la décrivent, pourvu qu'on les lise ensemble. Le bouddhisme est un produit de la pensée indienne. ... L'Inde l'a produit, l'Inde l'expliquera." (50).

  [12] "[Le Buddha] n'a pas été un magicien ou un moraliste à courtes vues quoi-que de coeur sincère, flottant entre des croyances et des doctrines contra-dictoires, trouvées éparses autour de lui. Il a été un maître pleinement cons-cient de sa pensée. ... [Il] n'est pourtant pas un magicien; c'est un maître de morale, et c'est un penseur; mais il pense avec son temps, et son temps pense avec son passé, lequel instruit les esprits en des catégories où la magie, tout entière absorbée, tourne au sens commun." (198-99)

  [13] Mus's contention that Brahmanical thought is preeminently practical, and epitomized in the fire sacrifice (*agnicayana*), is supported by the fact that five of the

fourteen books (covering nearly 700 pages) of the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* treat, in painstaking detail, the meaning and procedure of the fire sacrifice. By turning to the Brahmanical period in search of Total India, Mus shows sensitivity to what J. Eggeling noticed several decades earlier:

> "The *Brāhmaṇas*, it is well known, form our chief, if not our only, source of information regarding one of the most important periods in the social and mental development of India."

F. Max Müller, gen. ed., *The Sacred Books of the East*, 50 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1879-1910), vols. 12, 26, 41, 43, 44: *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, trans. and intro. Julius Eggeling, vol. 12, p. ix.

[14] The rationalism of the scientific world view does not tolerate discontinuity (184), whereas admission of the discontinuous is a precondition for comprehending projection and rupture of plane—two principles of the magical world view. The magical *modus operandi*, based above all in practice, need not adhere to the principles of intelligibility which a rational schema demands. It has its own categories, abstract formulas, and laws which (though different) are no less potent than those employed by science. Mus rhetorically asks, *"La pensée de l'Inde est-elle donc le développement d'une arithmologie quasi pythagoricienne?"* (231)

[15] Müller, gen. ed., *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, vol. 41, pp. 153-54.

[16] This essay does not outline fully Mus's presentation of Indian Buddhist history, as its scope favors method over content. However, based on issues raised in *Barabuḍur*, further analysis of Indian Buddhism would be illuminating. In fact, the development of East Asian Buddhism, for example, might be analyzed in terms of the cultural interaction of a product of Total India (Buddhism), and a product of Total China (Confucianism or Taoism).

[17] "L'adoption d'un rite ou d'une formule artistique ne résultera pas d'un progrès dogmatique, mais d'un conformisme naturel. Si les innovations contiennent parfois en puissance des notions qui soient en désaccord avec les dogmes propres à l'école, ou avec les conséquences implicites de ces dogmes, le procédé de leur adoption suffit à nous expliquer que de telles incompatibilités ne doivent apparaître qu'à la longue, ... quand les clercs auront tiré les conclusions intellectuelles d'usages admis d'abord soit par le simple effet de l'imitation, soit pour satisfaire à des besoins, ordinairement à des besoins nouveaux éprouvés par le commun des fidèles. Les clercs condamneront, ou au contraire ils justifieront, mais en les accommodant à l'orthodoxie, voire en modifiant cette dernière, les idées nouvelles venues pour ainsi dire d'en bas. Ou bien ils se diviseront à ce sujet, et ce sera un schisme." (71)

[18] "On se rappelle la transposition brutale par laquelle un primitif fait passer un vase de ce monde dans l'au-delà: il le casse. Cassé ici, entier là-bas. ...Référons-nous une fois de plus au témoignage ethnographique fondamental. L'*Upaniṣad* a concentré son attention sur le vase entier, placé dans l'au-delà. Le bouddhisme n'a gardé que les tessons. L'*Upaniṣad* orientait les esprits vers l'adoration d'un être transcendant, dominant l'universe et enfermant en son sein toute réalité. Du Buddha, le bouddhisme n'a gardé que les cendres. Qu'est le vase, le vase est-il; qu'est l'ātman, l'ātman est-il; qu'est le Buddha après le nirvāṇa, qu'est le nirvāṇa; le Buddha est-il, le nirvāṇa est-il? Questions refusées. 'Ce que je vous enseigne, fait-on dire au Buddha, c'est la douleur (le mal, *duḥkha*), et la cessation de la douleur.' " (173-175)

[19] Though not strictly adequate, we use the terms Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna to designate the two main branches of Buddishm because Mus uses them. Hīnayāna

Buddhists proclaimed the ideal of the *arhant*, a saint freed from rebirth due to having attained *nirvāṇa*. Hīnayāna (modest vehicle) was a term assigned to the group by Mahāyāna (great vehicle) adherents, due to their critique of the *arhant* ideal. Mahayanists proclaimed the ideal of the Buddha-to-be (*bodhisattva*), a saint who voluntarily continues to take rebirth in order to help other sentient beings. Scholars generally agree that the major Buddhist schism occurred sometime between 100 B.C.E. and 100 C.E., though precursors of each branch (the Sthavira and Mahāsāṅghika sects) emerged after the second Buddhist council in 383 B.C.E.

[20] Mus discusses the dynamic relation between art figures of Buddha, doctrinal contentions, and ritual practices with reference to the Mahayanist cult of the ornamented Buddha. He argues that royal ornaments on Buddha images have ritual significance relative to the appearance of the body of communion in meditation. Mus observes that only thorough contemplative effort is the symbolic dimension of the image realized. This symbolic dimension is suggested by certain iconographic features (such as lotuses, crowns, and other ornaments) that are ciphers of the body of communion. See Paul Mus, "Le Buddha paré, son origin indienne. Śākyamuni dans le Mahayanisme moyen," *Bulletin de l'école française d'extrême orient* 28 (1928): 205.

[21] "... [Q]u'a moins de réduire le Buddha à un simple nom et de s'ôter ainsi toute raison de croire en son existence historique, il nous paraît impossible de ne pas lui en faire honneur. Appuyée sur toutes les valeurs autochtones que nous avons tenté de restituer, l'invention n'était pas surhumaine: on peut la prêter à un chef d'école." (196)

[22] "Une fois inventée, sans rien devoir à la métaphysique, l'image du Buddha a fourni à la conscience religieuse un élément trop nouveau et trop important pour n'avoir pas réagi sur la théorie. La dévotion ne se lassant pas de la multiplier, sa fréquentation et son culte ont pu donner l'idée d'une multiplication des buddha, dans le passé et l'avenir, et même actuellement, au sein de l'espace infini. ... On pourrait dire que le passage du bouddhisme aniconique à un bouddhisme adorant l'image de Çākyamuni offre une sorte d'esquisse de l'évolution mahāyāniste, une anticipation à échelle réduite de ce grand mouvement spirituel, dont les origines nous sont encore si difficiles à saisir." (43)

[23] Gomez and Woodward expressed the following sentiment in their preface to *Barabuḍur*, p. ix:

"There is a final debt of gratitude: to the late Paul Mus, whose name will always be linked to Barabuḍur and whom both the editors, as graduate students at Yale University, were privileged to know; his immense charm we recall with delight, and for what was learned during those hours spent with a mind whose spontaneous combustion was due to an accumulation of both thought and experience, we shall remain forever thankful."

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KING AND BRAHMIN IN SOUTH INDIAN KINGSHIP: A SYMBOLIC PERSPECTIVE

(*Review article*)

G. OBEYESEKERE

Shulman, David Dean, *The King and the Clown in South Indian Myth and Poetry.* 447 pp., plates, bibliogr., index.—Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985.

This is a path-breaking study insofar as it forces South Asian scholars to re-evaluate our current orientations and to take stock of the future. Though purportedly a study of the myths of kingship in South India it really questions fundamental notions of *Indian* culture and, I think, also forces us to reconsider the nature of non-Hindu polities (such as the Buddhist). Such rethinking is not unexpected, since it was anticipated by Indologists like Heesterman, working on Vedic material, and recent innovative historians like Nicholas Dirks dealing with the small kingdoms of South India. Though many recent Indological studies are critical of Dumont, they could not have arisen without an ongoing argument with him. In a fundamental sense, Indological studies have been affected by larger currents of thought, that have questioned the very epistemological bases of empiricist historiography. Such historiography in the hands of its best practitioners, is not "wrong" but rather wrongheaded, to the extent that it excludes sources, such as myth and poetry that might have bearing on the peculiarly Indic view of history. We still have to use Western terms like "polity" and "history," since one cannot do without "megaconcepts," but such usage does not lead us to delimit history as the chronological devolution of events or of defining sources as "political" or "historical." Indeed what one views as medieval South Indian polity is not "what occurred in history," but rather the symbolic structures that order or engulf these occurences and absorb them into a larger frame. Indian history, it is well known, is singularly lacking in the documentation of historical events. There are only a

few sources that deal with what kings actually did—quite unlike Buddhism in this regard. Instead they tell us what they actually *were.* "Story" takes the place of history, and these stories embody the persona of the king and the polity. As Shulman points out in his very first chapter, it is futile to extricate the real king from his persona. What is historically significant is the very absence of empirical kingship in the myths or stories of kingship; instead the stories recount the symbolic ordering of society in great detail. The sources then force us into a "symbolicist historiography" and not to attempt to see the real (the event) in the fictive (the story). I don't for a moment think that Shulman is trying to deny the value and the continued use of empiricist historiography, but rather he is trying to use, for historical purposes, those sources that the culture itself provides in such profusion and which must have been culturally significant to the people. What is culturally significant to the people must surely be historically significant to the scholar. The stories then embody the *meaning* of history or polity for the people. They do not deal with what occurred in history.

I can perhaps introduce Shulman's argument by presenting a recent influential and largely correct reorientation to Hindu polity. Burton Stein has critically reviewed studies of South India that saw its polity as if it were variation of the Western state.[1] He argues that the South Indian polity possesses a segmentary structure lacking fixed boundaries like the Alur society studied by the Africanist Southall. While Stein's overall view of South Indian sociopolitical structure is correct, it is also the case that it is vastly different from the African. The distinctiveness of each lies in "culture", or the symbolic and conceptual ordering of their respective societies (pp. 18-20).

Within the South Indian symbolic order, the key personae, as scholars have noted time and again, are the king and the Brahmin. But, Shulman says, if the symbolic order of society has no real boundaries, then so it must be with the king and Brahmin. It is not just that the two figures interpenetrate, but also, more significantly, that each persona carries within itself its own antithesis, its own disintegration into something else. As far as the king is concerned he has an ideal persona, the icon. But this icon is constantly parodied, turned on its head, rendered ridiculous and transformed

over and over again. The book is about the formations and
transformations of the key personae of Brahmin and king who con-
stitute the axiomatic bases of the larger polity.

What are the fundamental ties that bind Brahmin and king in the
politics of South India? Once again one must see the actors in a
symbolically constituted universe. South Indian history is different
from its ancient Vedic counterpart where the Brahmanic sacrifice,
with its association with killing and violence, was central to the
polity. In medieval South India the ancient Brahmanic blood
sacrifice was decentered and the king, instead of being the giver of
the sacrifice, became the giver of gifts (*dāna*). Historically this
meant that the king's evil was no longer absorbed by the sacrifice
but was instead absolved by the gift to the Brahmin. This evil, in
the context of Hindu culture, is the sin (*pāpa*) that comes from the
practice of killing, a necessary role for the king. The king must
practice violence or *hiṃsā*, and his *daṇḍa* ("stick," "rod") sym-
bolizes this role. The South Indian king "will seek to transfer this
load of evil to the Brahmins who take his gifts; they, for their part,
are meant to dispose of it..." (p. 30). Ideally the king's bounty per-
vades the whole system of *jajmani* ("patron-client") relations, but
this distribution of his largesse is inevitably uneven. The temple
and its gods and Brahmins get the lion's share, because of the inner
pressure to endow and assuage the sin of killing. The more the king
fulfills his role as the bearer of the *daṇḍa*, the more sin he
accumulates, and this leads to "crises endowment" or "the
pressure to endow more and more." But this in turn requires
economic resources which must be obtained through "predatory
conquest," an integral part of the polity as scholars like Spencer
have noted.[2] The historical data show that the quest for booty
makes the king ransack temples and even kidnap deities!

Expansion replicates the inner dynamic of the symbolic order:
the king has to endow *Brahmadeyas* (gifts to Brahmins) in the new
territories to absolve him from sin and to get the support of the god
who mirrors the king and legitimizes his rule. "The fragile alliance
of the Brahmin and king both impels the kingdom to break out of
its normally contained state and places obvious limits on the
reconstructive potential of this break. Similarly, the mirror relation
of king and temple deity—each partner reflecting the inner divi-

sions of the other—works against any real consolidation of power in the hand of the ruler: the latter cannot ultimately transcend his own god'' (p. 37). Shulman correctly notes that insofar as Brahmins are part of the network of patron-client relations known as the *jajmani* system, the problems sketched above are replicated at every level of the society, even though in attenuated form. Hence kings are ''bearers of the meaningfulness of life as understood by the people of their time'' (p. 11).

To sum up: the paradox of power in this polity is that the greater the ruler's claim to authority, the less ''raw power'' he has in his hands, since he must give away what he has taken. In this sense he is not like the bandit (discussed in chapter 7) who embodies raw power (each shares some of the other's essence). The kingly model is replicated in the segments—the peripheral kingdoms—so that they also achieve the institutionalized weakness of the royal center. Though Shulman has no explicit criticism of empiricist historiography the implications are clear enough. The events recorded in inscriptions and other sources, such as those pertaining to temple grants, gifts to Brahmins, to the invasion of peripheral kingdoms and to predatory raids, have no intrinsic value unless seen within the frame of cultural meanings. The rest of the book is an attempt to unpack the rich profusion of symbolic forms (sometimes seemingly chaotic and even mutually contradictory) in order to tell us what they imply for medieval South Indian polity.

Shulman's general thesis is that the South Indian kingdom has no center. Instead there is a ''black hole'' (of a galactic rather than the Calcutta kind). Myths project a concept of the ideal king, but this iconic image is but one mask among many. Thus Dasaratha, the father of Rāma, represents the ''iconic persona of the king.'' He lives in a perfect city; he is possessed of wisdom and grace and he showers royal love (*anpu*) as a mother to a child. He affects the commonweal and as long as he reigns in justice the rains fall in time and the kingdom is blessed with fertility. But the Tamil version by Kampan places special emphasis on this perfect king revolted by kingship and becoming a renouncer. Dasaratha likens kingship to ''the sorrow of the lame buffalo yoked to an overburdened cart'' (p. 56). Thus, as in all these myths, the iconic image is reversed and becomes its own antithesis, and the king seems to have usurped the

persona of the Brahmin. Why so? We are back to the theme of *pāpa* ("sin," "evil"). "...behind the icon lurk the terrors of evil—both the inherent evils of ruling, above all killing and punishment, and the potential evil of kingly error in judgement..." (p. 57). The literature is full of transformations of these extremes, such as Appatthiran of the *Manimēkalai* who moves back and forth from king to renouncer; Vena the dark, entirely evil, king who cannot be deposed since, according to Brahmin thought, an evil king is better than no king. His son, born of the sacrifice, is once again the perfect king, though he also has a Rudraique (a dark) side to the benign (Visnuique) one (p. 86). It is not that there are good kings *and* evil kings as in Western kingship; it is that the king oscillates between extremes. In other words if the kingdom itself is characterized by instability, so is the inner being of the king. Ideally the iconic king is possessed of power, *pavṛtti*; but *pavṛtti* can as easily be transformed or transposed into its opposite, *nivṛtti*, represented in stories of clowning, exile and ascetic denial. "The iconic universe," Shulman reminds us much later, "is ruled by images of an illusory balance and stasis predicated on the clear separation of major symbolic figures, such as the king and Brahmin, devotee and god; these figures interact from within the bounds of their ideally defined roles" (p. 341). But the ideal or icon is "opposed to the basic thrust of South Asian social symbolism, which seeks transformation and movement as its inner law" (p. 341). Consequently the iconic image must suffer decomposition, liquefaction.

   This inner law of transformation applies not only to the king but to the other key persona of the polity, the Brahmin. There is an important difference however. The Brahmin has no iconic persona in myth and legend. Interestingly, the image of the *sānta* ("peaceful," "renunciatory") Brahmin *coexists* with its opposite in a dynamic tension (p. 149). "A violent potential is part of the Brahmin's symbolic identity." In the actual world also Chola kings employed Brahmin generals, as they did priests. But unlike kings who could represent one extreme or another or oscillate between extremes, the Brahmin, even the most violent, retained his hold on the ideal. But aside from this important difference, both Brahmins and kings suffered endless transformations as renouncer kings and Brahmin warriors. If the Vedic Brahmin was a figure at the center,

the South Indian one is a boundary figure at the gateway to the world and capable of moving towards or away from it.

In the symbolic universe of South Indian culture the key relation between Brahmin and king is viewed as a marriage, but instead of the harmonious ideal, it is a fractious marriage of the real. In this relation the Brahmin's role is as guardian of *saṃskāra*, i.e., the giving of ritual form, order and definition to the world. In this role he ought to be the exemplar of purity and of peace, but this is as unrealizable as iconic kingship, since you cannot "wring perfection from a recalcitrant world" (p. 98). As guardian of the gateway he cannot prevent the eruption of the world outside on his face. Consequently you have myths of the violent Brahmin such as Parasurāma, the matricide and killer of *kṣatriyas*. Parasurāma *seems* an un-Brahmanic Brahmin, an anomalous figure, but he is much at home in Indian myths. "Parasurama carries to a mythic extreme an enduring Brahmin conflict: on the one hand, restraint, purity, non-violence, detachment; in the other, inherent power, and the recurrent temptation to use it in the violent pursuit of an uncompromising vision. Indeed, the myth implies that the Brahmin can never be wholly free of violence..." (p. 118). This is an important statement, and one that has profound implications for South Asian scholarship, as I will show later. No wonder the Brahmin can say "...for me everything becomes reversed, like a reflection in a mirror; left seems to be right, and right becomes left" (p. 152). In this wilderness of mirrors, the Brahmin becomes the clown.

Like clowns everywhere the Brahmin clown turns the world topsy-turvy. In Sanskrit drama he appears as a stock figure, the *vidūṣaka*, the counterfoil to the royal hero, the *nāyaka*. His function: "A categorical challenge, a blow against *saṃskāra* in its widest sense of creating, maintaining, and refining conventional limits and forms" (p. 160). The *saṃskāric* ordered world of the Brahmin is held up to ridicule. Nevertheless the *vidūṣaka* is not a satirist in the Western sense. He is practically impotent, and his satire does not sway the action in many meaningful sense (p. 167). One "laughs at" the *vidūṣaka* rather than *with* him, Shulman says, borrowing an idea from Ramanujan. But this changes when the Brahmin clown becomes the jester, as in the folk narratives from the Guntur District of Andhra, of the court jester, Tenāli.

Neither Tenāli nor court jesters existed in actual courts. They
are inventions of the folk tradition. But unlike the *vidūṣaka* who can-
not exist without the hero (*nāyaka*) and is constrained by his
presence, the jester has a free rein and is totally reflexive. He pro-
ceeds to a wholesale violation of the norms of both Brahmin and
king. Shulman says that this jester tradition continues to our own
day in contemporary folk clowns of the Tamil country. The Tamil
clown is also an exemplar of reflexivity and, like the previous come-
dians, a boundary figure ''endowed with the primary features of
the boundary such as paradoxicality, fluidity, inconsistency, self-
transformation, and a powerful sense of being 'in process''' (p.
208). The spectrum of comic figures ''offers varying types and
degrees of reflexivity upon the given order and its representatives''
(p. 208).

Thus far Shulman's emphasis has been on the Brahmanic clown
who brings the forces of disorder into the center of the *saṃskāric*
order. The clown might be a kind of disorderly alter ego of the king
but he is not explicitly identified as such. The last three chapters
brings us to the beginning by focusing on the king himself, who in
chapter 5 becomes a clown or buffoon—of sorts. ''Folk clowning
brings the 'disintegrating' dynamic of the culture into its symbolic
center: the same figure who is responsible for society's proper order
may be said to undermine this order, to unravel the fabric even as
it is being woven, to open up his kingdom to indeterminate forces
of transformation and flux... the comic transformations of the
South Indian king form part of an always undiminished business of
the kingdom's 'becoming''' (p. 215).

The situation is radically different from Western kingship where
one can speak of a more stable form of being. Thus Henry V can
hive off the ''disorderly and irreverent excess'' represented by
Falstaff and deny its relevance for kingship. He ''exiles'' Falstaff,
while the Indian king exiles himself. Shulman deals with a variety
of exilic themes, the most striking being that of the Kerala king
Ceraman Perumal (pp. 246-56) who, crazed by a mad religious fer-
vor, worships the lowly washerman and attempts to give the
kingdom to an untouchable. After the ''exile'' the crazed or comic
king comes back to the kingdom. In this situation one sees, I think,
a kind of ''social drama' (in Victor Turner's sense) develop. The

first stage portrays the "normal order" replete with tension and latent conflict; then there is a stage where these conflicts erupt disruptively pushing the king from his throne to the shadowy world of impurity, unreality, geographical remoteness; and finally to a stage of restoration when proper boundaries are reestablished. In this process the orderly hero can get transformed into the grotesque clown, but one "reflexive by default" (p. 298). Thus the key figures of the realm, the king and the Brahmin, exchange their persona: the king renounces, the Brahmin kills. So is it with the kingdom as it oscillates between *pavṛtti* and *nivṛtti*, "building and destroying." "Its structures are weak and infinitely flexible; it enshrines ambiguity as an epistemological principle, and self-transcendence as an ontological 'fact'; it fashions stability out of instability, and integrates by way of ceaseless disintegration and decomposition" (pp. 301-2). This oscillation is once again projected on a different plane in a brilliant chapter, "All the Kings's Women," where the king is married symbolically not only to a wife and queen (who will sustain the illusion of stability), but very importantly "to a group of courtesans who will undermine or impair it" (p. 311). Yet on another level these courtesans are the very agents of fertility and they release the king's own generative powers for the good of the kingdom (p. 307).

I will now evaluate this work not from the perspective of a historian of religion but from that of a practicing anthropologist. One of the truly profound influences in Indological studies has been that of Louis Dumont. Shulman's work, though critical of Dumont, still takes its bearing from him. It was Dumont who highlighted the centrality of the king and the Brahmin and their interdependence in terms of a structural opposition between power and purity. This is replicated structurally but not substantively on the local level in the relationship between *jajman* and *kamin*, patron and client, dominant and service castes. The renouncer is a key figure but is in some sense removed from the systemic interplay of power and purity. Some of the most interesting insights in South Asian research has come from the scholarly debate with Dumont. Marriott's work, for example, has rejected Dumont's dualism for a purported nondualistic Indian perspective, but one can as easily argue that Marriott's nondualism hardly solves any problem but

simply states the opposite of Dumont's. It is certainly the case that
Marriott can find Hindu ideas—for example, in *Saṃkya*
philosophy—that fit his "nondualism," but what Shulman shows,
as Wendy O'Flaherty[3] did previously in respect of Yogavāṣiṣṭha
myths, is that popular Indian myth questions Western categories,
dualistic or nondualistic, that have been stuck on them. Hindu
thought eludes these characterizations by the very permeability of
boundaries, Shulman tells us. Thus the Brahmin, the exemplar of
purity and peace, contains within his being both violence and
impurity, a feature that he carries, however displaced or
decentered, from his Vedic sacrificial heritage. The king can be a
renouncer, and though Shulman does not deal with it, renouncers
are often in practice treated as kings. One can of course reply that
if Brahmins and kings contain within each persona contradictory
attributes, structural analysis still holds since structural oppositions
continue to operate on another level. But this would miss the point
entirely because Indic fluid boundaries make nonsense of all struc-
tures. Shulman's work is also consonant with Kakar's treatment of
Hindu fantasy, where once again the barrier that separates the
three compartments of the Freudian topography is blurred.[4]

While I agree with Shulman's position regarding South Indian
thought I am still troubled by a nagging doubt. Dumont's work, it
must be remembered, emerged from his study of caste. Reading
Shulman one rarely comes across that word, even though by any
reasonable criterion caste should be included in polity! Is caste the
area in the body politic where "the disintegrating dynamic of the
culture" does *not* operate? It is true there are classic myths—such
as in the *Gita*—that depict caste intermingling, but these are symp-
toms of a disorder that are condemned. Shulman's analysis of
Brahmin and king is based on texts, but texts that have a bearing
on life, and hold a mirror to life. Thus two questions: Firstly, if
fluidity of thought, black holes, liminality and the like, are
enshrined at the center, why do they not appear with caste? There
is no way one can avoid this issue. Secondly, Shulman might well
argue that there are myths where the king becomes an untouchable
and so forth and this proves that the fluidity or liquefaction of
thought applies to caste as well. But then Shulman must admit
there is a difference between what is symbolically expressed in the

myth and the social reality of Hindu hierarchy, for while many will question the view of caste as an inflexible system, who will say that it is a fluid, boundaryless one! Consequently any theory of Hindu thought or polity must eventually deal with Dumont's central concern with hierarchy and attack the problem of fluid boundaries, in thought and polity, that coexists with its opposites—hierarchy and boundary—in the caste system. It may well be that the one requires the other, and that while the symbolism of the center is fluid, not so with the rest of the body politic. One might have to develop further one of Shulman's themes where the king remains impassive in his narcissistic parade before his female subjects. This "leaves no room for a real meeting of king and subject, or king and kingdom; rather the two—the body politic and its central symbolic representative—are essentially identified with the divisions of their ideally ordered condition" (p. 324). Or one can take a more radical, yet reasonable, view, that the nature of thought has no intrinsic relationship to the political or social order. This will pose a problem for Shulman, whose main argument is that the myths he discusses are in fact expressed in events and encapsulate them, so that, for example, Chola armies had Brahmin generals, some kings in fact became renouncers, and overlapping segmentary political structures actually existed.

I agree with Shulman that the fluidity and lack of boundary in the polity and in the symbolic forms that express liminality are true of the material he discusses. But can one stretch this idea to ignore geographical, historical and social context? Is South India all one, and can one move from north to south, from the *Mahābhāratha* to modern-day clowns without raising problems of context? Shulman uses comic dramas from Kerala seen at Madison, Wisconsin, to throw light on medieval South Indian polity. Again, consider how important it is for Shulman that it is the Brahmin who is the clown. Yet he sees modern South Indian clowns continuing the old tradition but he does not record their caste! They are, I think, non-Brahmin, but this piece of context is ignored, even though the theme is about Brahmin clowning. Moreover what is the contextual significance of a Brahmin clown in the traditions of non-Brahmin peoples such as the Tenāli Rāma tradition of Andhra? This interesting character satirizes the Brahmin *purōhita* of the court, but

that this jester is an invention of ordinary folk, geographically and sociologically remote from the court, is not crucial to Shulman. For him these tales are of the same qualitative order as the various renderings of the *Mahābhāratha* and *Rāmayana*. Moreover Shulman himself says that actual jesters probably never existed in the courts. Is not a huge interpretive burden placed on this jester when he never existed as a persona in the courts? Moreover, as far as the folk literature itself is concerned, "there is only one such jester in the Tamil and Telegu traditions" (p. 180). Tenāli Rāma is a scathing folk satire on Brahmin and king, but I am not sure that he could properly be juxtaposed with the *vidūṣaka* of Sanskrit drama. I think it important that the radically reflexive Tenāli Rāma, a figure who is against "all forms of privilege, pretense and convention" (p. 185, can exist only when he is *distanced* from the court.

Throughout the book the term "reflexivity" appears as a key word. It seems to me that this is *our* extrapolation from the texts, a word currently fashionable, and one I myself like! But it carries too much of a load in Shulman's analysis. Consider Tenāli Rāma once again. It is true that he is a truly reflexive clown, but Shulman uses his case—the one example of a jester in all of Tamil and Telegu literature—to throw light on reflexivity in the culture at large. I can imagine a thoroughly nonreflexive culture having texts of this sort scattered throughout a long historical period. Cultural reflexivity, it seems to me, must be grounded in context and shown in samples of actual discourse. Then one might find that it varies with different historical periods and among social groups. The fact that peasants write about reflexive Brahmins does not mean that Brahmin's are reflexive or that the culture as a whole is reflexive. In fact it can be shown that, contrary to Shulman, the king is *not* a reflexive persona. In chapter 5 he deals with the king who becomes a clown, but "the king's clowning is unconscious" (p. 216). I am not sure whether "unconscious clowning" of this un-Freudian sort can properly be considered reflexive. One section deals with "the king as buffoon," but the king here does not intend "to be comical or grotesque; in fact he seem oblivious of this effect..." (p. 227). So with Ceraman, the popular king of Kerala myth. He is "as usual, reflexive by default" (p. 251). What is it

to be reflexive by default? It is as if Shulman very much wants these kings to be reflexive when in fact they resist it! It may well be that one of the interesting problems for Shulman to consider in later research is why some characters (and the people who write about them) are truly reflexive while others resist being reflexive and yet others (like the king's women) shun reflexivity for adoration. This then brings us to a central issue: How does adoration (*bhakti*) which is a value for the culture at large coexist with reflexivity, also a key value in Shulman's thinking for South Indian culture? This kind of question I think requires a serious preoccupation with historical, social, temporal and geographical context.

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[1] Burton Stein, *Peasant, State and Society in Medieval India* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1980).
[2] George W. Spencer, *The Politics of Expansion: The Chola Conquest of Sri Lanka and Sri Vijaya* (Madras, 1983).
[3] Wendy Doniger O'Flaherty, *Dreams, Illusion and Other Realities* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984).
[4] Sudhir Kakar, *The Inner World* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1981); see also, Valentine Daniel, *Fluid Signs: Being a Person the Tamil Way* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985).

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

The Editors are requested to insert the following announcements.

33 ICANAS (cf. *Numen* 34, 143)

The 33rd International Congress of Asian and North African Studies (formerly International Congress of Orientalists) will take place in Toronto August 19 through 25, 1990, on the campus of the University of Toronto. The program theme is "Contacts between Cultures." To receive mailings concerning the Congress, please write to the 33 ICANAS Secretariat, c/o Profs. Julia Ching and Willard Oxtoby, Victoria College, University of Toronto, Toronto M5S 1K7, Canada.

University of Manitoba: Religious Studies

The Department of Religion at the University of Manitoba is planning a workshop on RELIGIOUS STUDIES: DIRECTIONS FOR THE NEXT TWO DECADES to be held on the Campus of the University of Manitoba, September 21-23, 1989. The worshop will deal with the role of religious studies at secular universities: past, present and future. A detailed description of sessions planned and topics to be discussed will be sent on request. Abstracts of papers to be presented together with a brief curriculum vitae must reach the planning committee before March 15, 1989. The complete papers will have to be in the hands of the committee by June 15, 1989 for advance circulation to all participants. Some funding will be available. Proceedings of the workshop will be published in bookform within a year. For enquiries write to Dr. Klaus K. Klostermaier, Chair, Department of Religion, University of Manitoba, Winnipeg R3T 2N2 Canada.